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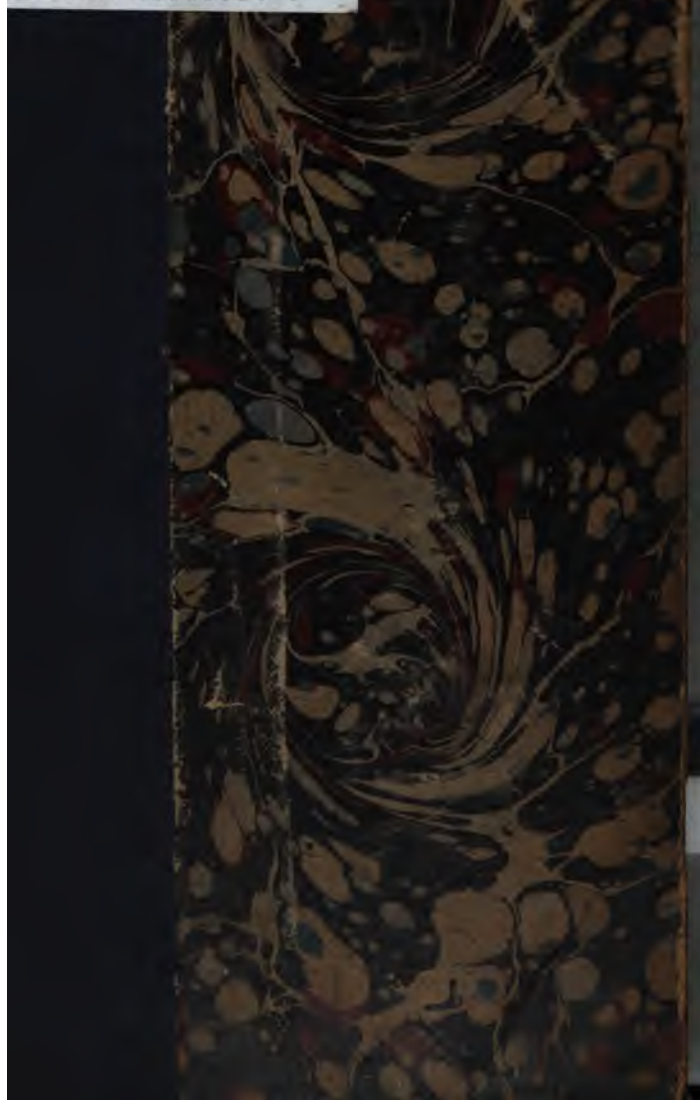
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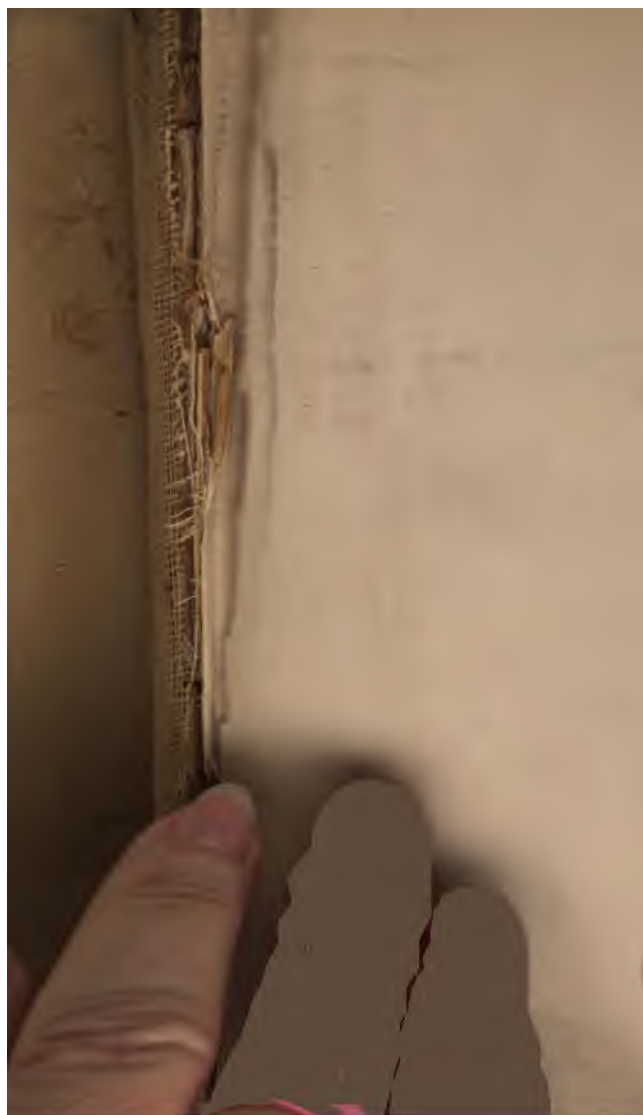
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*Knowledge for the People:*

OR, THE PLAIN

WHY AND BECAUSE.

FAMILIARIZING SUBJECTS OF USEFUL CURIOSITY AND  
AMUSING RESEARCH.

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**Knowledge for the People:**

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FAMILIARIZING SUBJECTS OF USEFUL CURIOSITY AND  
AMUSING RESEARCH.

BY JOHN TIMBS,

*Editor of 'Laconics,' 'Arcana of Science and Art,' &c.*

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"Its beginning is pleasure, its progress knowledge, and its objects truth  
and utility."—*Sir Humphry Davy.*

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**Domestic Series.**

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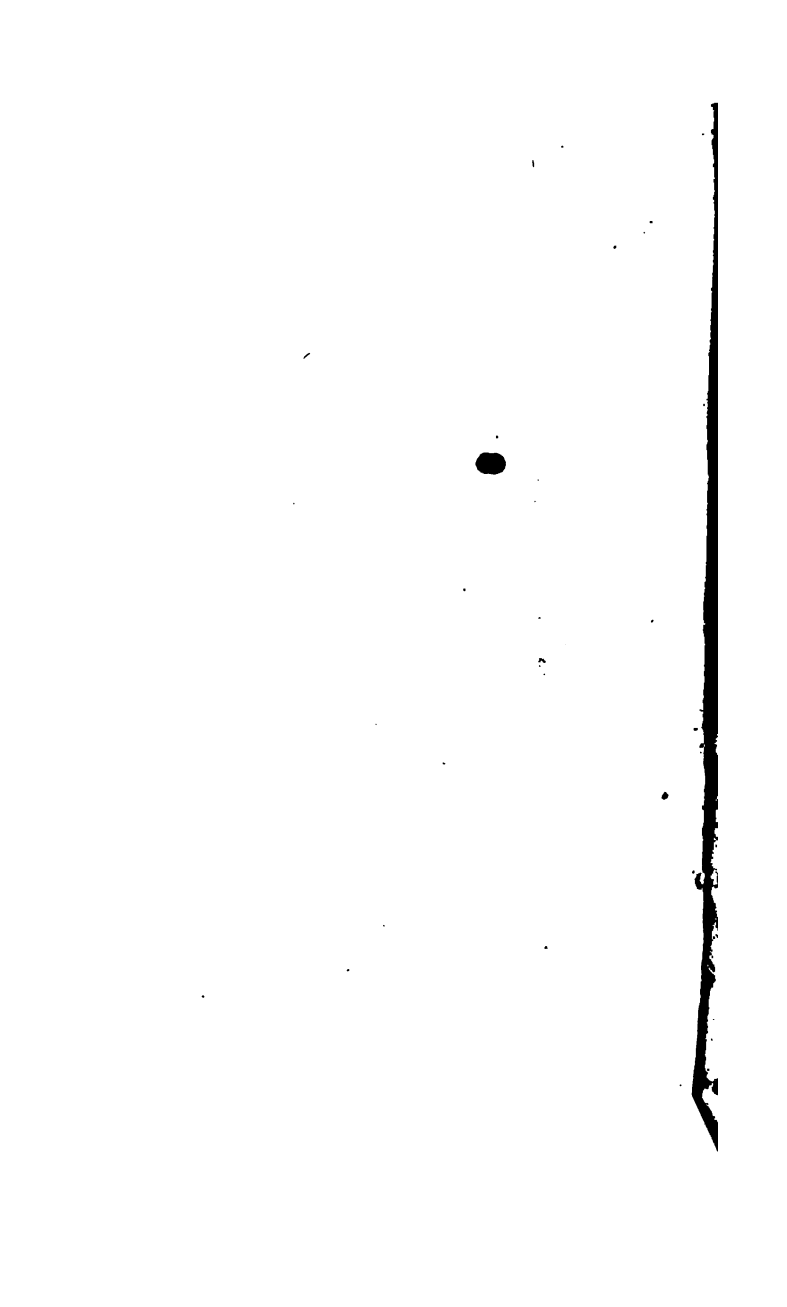
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# DOMESTIC SCIENCE.

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ILLUSTRANS COMMODA VITÆ

*Motto of the Royal Institution.*

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## FIRES.

*Why are coke and charcoal fires free from smoke?*

Because the moisture has been previously dissipated; this moisture producing the smoke of coal fires.

*Why does too much coal on a fire cause the chimney to smoke?*

Because, when the heat begins to operate on the coal, gas is extricated; this gas carrying some of the grosser particles along with it, a heavy smoke is thrown out, which will not rise in the chimney, but by its own gravity is forced back into the room; on which the warm air of the apartment being lighter than what comes in, instantly ascends towards the ceiling, and the lower part becomes cool. But if a portion of the fuel is taken off, then the small quantity of active caloric, or heat, acts with greater force on the unconsumed coal, brings out its latent or inactive heat more rapidly, and thereby producing a quicker decomposition of the gases, by the increasing combustion, the smoke becomes thinner and lighter, and though it carries up certainly more caloric with it proportionally than before, yet the quantity of radiant heat is greater, and the temperature of the apartment is more equalized.



*Why do some chimneys smoke?*

Because the wind is too much let in at the mouth of the shaft, or the smoke is stifled below; or there is too little room in the vent, particularly where several open into the same funnel. The situation of the house may likewise affect them, especially if backed by higher buildings.

*Why is a common coal fire often extinguished long before the fuel is all expended?*

Because the fire or flame left to itself is so small that it does not produce heat enough to maintain the inflaming temperature of the substance; and the remnants are not gathered together to reduce the surface of wasteful radiation. — *Arnott.*

*Why does water thrown on a brisk and flaming fire apparently increase the combustion?*

Because the water is converted into steam, which expanding and mixing with the flame, causes it to spread out into a much larger volume than it otherwise would have occupied. — *Arnott.*

*Why does sunshine extinguish a fire?*

Because the rays engage the oxygen which had hitherto supported the fire.

*Why does a fire burn briskly and clearly in cold weather?*

Because the air being more dense, affords more nourishment to the fire.

*Why is it wasteful to wet small coal?*

Because the moisture, in being evaporated, carries off with it, as latent, and therefore useless, a considerable proportion of what the combustion produces. It is a very common prejudice, that the wetting of coal, by making it last longer, effects a great saving; but, in truth, it restrains the combustion, and for a time makes a bad fire; it also wastes the heat.

*Why does a poker laid across a dull fire revive it?*

Because the poker receives and concentrates the heat, and causes a draught through the fire.

*Why do vegetable stocks, &c, burn briskly?*

Because of the quantity of carbon which they contain.

*Why does flour of sulphur thrown into a fire-place extinguish a chimney when on fire?*

Because, by its combustion, it effects the decomposition of the atmospheric air, which is, consequently, annihilated.

*Why do certain furnaces consume their own smoke?*

Because the smoke or flame of fresh fuel, on its way to the chimney, passes through, over, or among, fuel, which, having already been converted into coke or charcoal, had ceased to smoke; by which expedient the grosser parts of the flame or smoke are consumed, or converted into pure flame, free from smoke.

*Why do we prevent a nuisance and effect a great saving by destroying or burning smoke?*

Because coal containing much hydrogen, as all flaming coal does, is used wastefully when any of the hydrogen escapes without burning: for, first, the great heat which the combustion of such hydrogen would produce is not obtained; and, secondly, the hydrogen, while becoming gas, absorbs still more heat into the latent state than an equal weight of water would. Now the smoke of a fire is the hydrogen of the coal rising in combination with a portion of carbon. — *Arnott.*

*Why are strong flames often seen at the chimney-top of foundry furnaces?*

Because the heat of the furnace is so great that the smoke burns on reaching the oxygen of the atmosphere.

*Why is it evident that coal is derived from vegetation?*

Because there are few coals but that present more or less of a woody texture: to be traced from the bituminized wood, which still bears, though ap-

proaching in its nature to coal, the trunk, the branches, and even the very leaves of trees, through all the varieties of coal, into the most compact slaty kind, of the oldest formation. — *Bakewell.*

*Why is charcoal sometimes found among coal?*

Because the slate which covers the coal layers takes fire, in consequence of its containing sulphur, in such minute division, as readily to attract oxygen and inflame; thus converting vegetable remains into charcoal.\*

*Why are charcoal and coke obtained in closed vessels?*

Because the wood and coal from which they are obtained, if similarly heated in the air, would burn or combine with the oxygen of the air; but heated in a vessel or place which excludes air, they merely give out their more volatile parts.

*Why do fatal accidents happen from the burning of charcoal in chambers?*

Because of the abundance of carbonic acid gas extricated during the combustion.

*Why are the insides of water-casks charred, or slightly burned?*

Because the charcoal thus produced in the casks, keeps the water sweet, and, in some measure, preserves the wood from the influence of damp.

*Why are long, shallow stove-grates uneconomical?*

Because the body of the coal is not soon heated, and requires to be oftener replenished, to keep up the fire.

*Why is the extreme heat of stoves for heating rooms, pernicious to health?*

Because, if the temperature be thus raised much higher than 300° Fahrenheit, the animal and vegetable matter, which is found mechanically mixed at all times with the air, will be decomposed, and certain

\* This curious fact is recorded by Dr Richardson, the naturalist, in Franklin's expedition of discovery, respecting the shale on the coasts of the Arctic Sea. This shale composed precipitous banks, which, in many places, were on fire.

elastic vapours and fluids produced, of a deleterious quality, and peculiar smell. The matter here alluded to is very visible to the naked eye in a sun-beam let into a dark room.

*Why do flint and steel when struck together produce a shower of sparks?*

Because small portions of one or both are struck off by the violence of the collision, in a state of white heat, and the particles of the iron burn in passing through the air: in a vacuum the heated particles are equally produced, but are scarcely visible from this combustion not occurring. In both cases they suffice to inflame gunpowder, or to light tinder.

#### EFFECTS OF HEAT.

*Why do we stick a pin in a rushlight to extinguish it?*

Because the pin conducts away so much heat that the tallow will not melt, or rise in the wick.

*Why does the heater of a tea-urn soon change when placed near the water?*

Because it parts with its heat to the water, until both are of the same temperature.

*Why are meat screens lined with tin?*

Because the polished metal reflects the heat upon the roasting meat, and thus expedites the cooking, independently of the screen itself protecting the joint from currents of air. On this account, screens, entirely of tin, are calculated for expeditious cookery.

*Why will that part of the curtains of a room which has been exposed to the sun, be often faded, while those parts which have not been so exposed retain their original colours?*

Because the oxygen which existed in a solid form in the dye of the curtains, will be rendered æriform by the rays of the sun, and will go off in the state of oxygen gas.

*Why is a harp or piano-forte, which is well tuned in*

*a morning drawing-room, not perfectly in tune when a crowded evening party has heated the room?*

Because, the expansion of the strings is greater than that of the wooden frame-work; and in cold the reverse will happen. — *Arnot.*

*Why are urns for hot water, tea-pots, coffee-pots, &c, made with wooden or ivory handles?*

Because, if metal were used, it would conduct the heat so readily that the hand could not bear to touch them; whereas wood and ivory are non-conductors of heat.

*Why does a gate in an iron railing shut loosely and easily in a cold day, and stick in a warm one?*

Because, in the latter, there is a greater expansion of the gate and railing than of the earth on which they are placed.

*Why are thin glass tumblers less liable to be broken by boiling water, than thick ones?*

Because the heat pervades the thin vessels almost instantly, and with impunity, whereas thicker ones do not allow a ready passage of heat.

*Why will a vessel which has been filled to the lip with warm liquid, not be full when the liquid has cooled?*

Because of the expansion of the fluid by heat. Hence some cunning dealers in liquids make their purchases in very cold weather, and their sales in warm weather.

*Why is a glass stopper, sticking fast in the neck of a bottle, often released by surrounding the neck with a cloth taken out of hot water, or by immersing the bottle up to the neck?*

Because the binding ring is thus heated and expanded sooner than the stopper, and so becomes slack or loose upon it.

*Why does straw or flannel prevent the freezing of water in pipes during winter?*

Because it is a slow conducting screen or covering,

and thus prevents heat passing out of the pipe. By the same means the heat is retained in steam pipes.

*Why have ice-houses double walls, and why do wine-coolers consist of double vessels?*

Because air fills the intervals between the walls or vessels; or in some cases the space is filled with straw, sawdust or charcoal, all which are non-conductors of heat.

*Why have some houses double windows?*

Because the air inclosed between the two windows greatly prevents the escape of heat which is produced within the house in winter. Thus, air is an imperfect conductor of heat. Houses which have double windows are likewise more quiet than others, from the air being also a bad conductor of sound.

#### EVAPORATION.

*Why is a decanter of cold water when brought into a warm room, speedily covered with dew?*

Because the temperature of the decanter is lower than that of the air immediately around it. The dew may be wiped off again and again, but will be constantly reproduced till the temperatures are equal. Upon this principle, the most convenient sort of hygrometer, or instrument for measuring the quantity of vapour in the atmosphere, is constructed.

*Why are porous vessels used for wine-coolers?*

Because, being dipped in water, they imbibe a quantity of it, which gradually evaporates; and, as a part of the heat necessary to convert the water into vapour will be taken from a bottle of wine placed in it, the wine is considerably cooled.

*Why does the breath or perspiration of animals (of horses in particular, after strong exertion,) become strikingly visible in cold or damp weather?*

Because the vapour (invisible while at a higher temperature) is thickly precipitated, by the air with

which it is mixed being too cold to preserve it invisible.

*Why is profuse perspiration so cooling to labouring men, and all evaporation productive of cold?*

Because of the necessity of a large quantity of caloric being combined with fluids, to convert them into vapour or gas.

*Why do persons take cold by sitting in wet clothes?*

Because they suddenly lose a large portion of heat, which is carried off from the body by the evaporation of the water from the clothes.

*Why, in hot countries, do persons continually throw water on curtains which there form the sides of apartments?*

Because the evaporation of the water absorbs a vast deal of heat, and makes the apartments cool and refreshing.

*Why are assembly-rooms ventilated?*

Because of the motion produced by the changed weight of air, when heated. The air which is within the room becomes warmer than the external air, and the latter then presses in at every opening or crevice to displace the former.

*Why does the sulphuric acid in fire bottles so often fail in igniting the matches?*

Because the acid is continually attracting moisture from the air, owing to the imperfect manner of closing the bottles.

#### WATER.

*Why do fluids always accommodate themselves to the shape of the vessels which contain them?*

Because fluids want cohesion among their parts, whence they are incapable of assuming any particular form without external support.

*Why is water never found of the highest purity?*

Because all natural waters are constantly coming into contact with some substance which they either

dissolve or hold in suspension, arising from the great range of the affinity of water, and its peculiar action as a chemical agent.

*Why is lime most generally contained in natural waters?*

Because there are few springs which, during some part of their subterranean course, do not come in contact with calcareous earth, and there is no substance which appears so readily soluble in a variety of menstrua. The presence of lime uncombined in any natural waters is, however, conjectural.

*Why is rain-water generally impure when collected in large towns?*

Because it acquires a small quantity of sulphate of lime, and carbonate of lime, from the mortar of the roof, and plaster of the houses.

*Why are ice and snow waters of superior purity?*

Because they contain no gas or air, or saline substances, such having been expelled during freezing.

*Why is the taste of common water pleasing and refreshing?*

Because of the gases (carbonic acid and common air) which it contains.

*Why does the best water exhibit the greatest number of air bubbles, when poured into a glass?*

Because it contains the greatest quantity of carbonic acid gas, in addition to its proportion of atmospheric air.

*Why do air bubbles in a glass of water dilate as they rise from the bottom to the surface?*

Because the pressure of the liquor becomes less and less upon them.

*Why is some water hard?*

Because it contains calcareous salts, with carbonate and sulphate of lime; one grain of the latter, contained in 2,000 grains of soft water, being sufficient to convert it into the hardest water that is commonly met with. — *Brande.*



*Why is hard water subject to become putrid, and generally turbid?*

Because of the vegetable or animal matter which it contains; and from the suspension of earthy impurity; when drank, it is flat, from the absence of air. — *Brande.*

*Why does potash or soda render hard water soft?*

Because a decomposition is thus effected, and the carbonate of lime, a very insoluble salt, precipitated.

*Why is hard water ill adapted for washing?*

Because it contains sulphate of lime, which, by a double decomposition, separates the materials of soap.

*Why is river water much softer and more free from air and earthy salts than spring water?*

Because river water, by the agitation of a long current, and in many cases an increase of temperature, loses both common air and carbonic acid, and, with the last much of the lime or magnesia which it formerly held in solution. The specific gravity hereby becomes less, the taste not so harsh and agreeable; and out of a hard spring, by mere exposure to the atmosphere or the action of the soil, is often made a stream of sufficient purity for most purposes where soft water is required. — *A. Booth.*

*Why is the Thames water of such extreme softness?*

Because, from observations at and below London bridge, as far up as Kew and Oxford, it is supposed that the waters seldom change, being probably carried up and down with the turn of the tides for an indefinite period of time.

*Why are the objections to Thames water removed by filtration?*

Because its impurities have no influence in permanently altering the quality of the water, which is good; and, as they are only suspended, mere rest, especially such as is given by filtration, will restore the water to its original purity.

*Why is water raised from beneath the surface of the earth by a pump?*

Because the atmosphere presses equally upon the whole surface of the water in the well, until the rod of the pump is moved; but, by forcing the rod down, the bucket compresses the air in the lower part of the pump-tree, which, being elastic, forces its way out of the tree through the valve; so that, when the bucket is again raised, that part of the pump-tree under the bucket is void of air; and the weight of the atmosphere pressing upon the body of water in the well, forces up a column of water to supply its place; the next stroke of the pump-rod causes another column of water to rise; and so long as the bucket fits the pump tree close enough to produce a vacuum, a constant stream of water may be drawn from below.

*Why are filtering stones usually made of porous free-stone?*

Because they are the nearest imitation of the natural process by which the purest waters rise through sand or siliceous rock.

*Why is the temperature of cold springs in general pretty uniform?*

Because they take their origin at some depth from the surface, and below the influence of the external atmosphere.

*Why is the same spring water which appears warm in winter deemed cold in summer?*

Because, though always of the same heat, it is in summer surrounded by warmer atmosphere and objects.

*Why does not water freeze in pipes two or three feet under ground, when it is frozen in all the smaller branches above?*

Because the earth conducts heat slowly, and the severest frosts penetrate but a few inches into it;

while the temperature of the ground a few feet below its surface is nearly the same all the world over.

*Why are leaden cisterns unsafe for holding water for culinary purposes?*

Because, if the water has stood in them for several days undisturbed, a small coating of white rust may be seen at the upper edge of the water. On every fresh addition of water this rust is washed off; and, if there be the slightest degree of acidity in the vessel, the rust of lead will be dissolved in the water, and thus an insidious poison will be conveyed into the stomach. This rust, or oxyde, as it is chemically called, is produced by the lead combining with the oxygen of the water.

*Why are water-pipes, bottles, &c, often burst by water freezing in them?*

Because of the expansion of the particles of the water, which, when they crystallize and assume the solid state, unite by certain sides in preference to others, arranging themselves so as to require more space, and having numerous vacuities, the bulk of the whole must necessarily be enlarged.

*Why is ice lighter than water?*

Because of the air-bubbles produced in the ice while freezing.

*Why is soda-water so called?*

Because it contains, when well prepared, a very small portion of carbonate of soda, which corrects acidity in the stomach.

*Why is soda-water 'from the fountain' inferior to that sold in bottles?*

Because the former is merely water impregnated with carbonic acid gas by a forcing pump, and consequently liable to be contaminated by copper, zinc, or lead, according to the vessels in which the condensation is carried on.

*Why is it difficult to pour from a vessel which has not a projecting lip?*

Because, in pouring water from a mug or bottle lip, the water does not at once fall perpendicularly, but runs down along the inclined outside of the vessel, chiefly in consequence of the attraction between this and the water.

#### ICE WELLS.

*Why is ice broken before it is stored in wells?*

Because it may reunite in the interior; in a long frost it diminishes considerably in bulk, as it forms itself into a compact mass, by freezing in the well.

*Why should ice be taken from the sides of the well, and the centre left till the last?*

Because, if the ice is first taken from the middle, you disturb the body, and the air thus introduced will destroy more than you consume.

#### BOILING.

*Why does water boil in a vessel on a fire?*

Because the parts of the liquid next the fire get heated, and rise up through the colder parts which are heavier; and this is found to be the principal manner of communicating heat to all parts of a liquid: for, if the heat is applied at the top, it can only with great difficulty be conducted through the liquid either sideways or downwards; but when applied below, the parts, as they are heated, become enlarged and lighter; they rise to the top, and heat the others in their progress, while those others, being still somewhat heavier, sink down, and are heated fully in their turn. By degrees, the whole liquid gets so hot that the parts next the bottom are converted into steam or vapour, which rises through the rest of the liquid in bubbles to the top, and there flies off till the whole liquid is evaporated.

*Why does the spout of a kettle emit a thick cloud or vapour?*

Because the steam from the water is then cooled according to its distance from the spout; whereas steam is so transparent as hardly to be seen near the mouth.

*Why should a tea-kettle be removed from the fire when the steam from it appears cloudy?*

Because the water is then beginning to be condensed, the steam when the water first boils being perfectly transparent.

*Why does a kettle containing water, boiling on a fire, in part resemble a still?*

Because the water at the bottom of the kettle, or next the source of heat, combines with heat, and forms vapour, which is discharged from the spout in steam. By fixing a long tube of glass or metal to the spout, the steam will be condensed, and drops of water will run from the other end. But the tube which corresponds with the *worm* in the still, becoming as hot as the steam, it can abstract no more heat, and then the condensation ceases. Hence the necessity of keeping the tube cool, which may be done by its passing through cold water. Thus, the whole water in the kettle may be boiled away, but reproduced in the tubes, and collected from it without the loss of a drop. This process is not only the principle, but very nearly the practice of *distillation*, as it is called, and the simple apparatus here described is nearly the model of a still. — Donovan.

*Why should the bottom of a tea-kettle be black, and the top polished?*

Because the bottom has to absorb heat, which is aided by rough and blackened surfaces; and the top has to retain heat, which is ensured by polished ones.

*Why is a crust so frequently seen on the insides of tea-kettles and boilers?*

Because of the hard water boiled in them, which

holds in solution carbonate of lime (*see page 12,*) but being long boiled, the latter is no longer soluble, and becomes precipitated.

*Why is water, when boiled, mawkish and insipid?*

Because the gases which it contained have been expelled by boiling.

*Why is hard water by boiling brought nearly to the state of soft?*

Because it is freed from its gases, and its earthy salts and substances, by which its hardness was produced, are precipitated.

*Why does water, which has been deprived of air by boiling, freeze more readily than unboiled water?*

Because of a slight agitation upon its surface occasioned by the attraction of air. — *Black.*

*Why should not the water with which gold and silver fish are supplied, be boiled?*

Because the water is then deprived of its atmospheric air, and no animals can live in it.

*Why is a drop of water tranquil in a very hot silver tea-spoon, and some time in evaporating?*

Because of the intervention of a film of vapour, which prevents the contact of the water and the metal, and so interferes with the transmission of heat.

*Why is it wasteful to put fuel under a boiling pot, with the hope of making the water hotter?*

Because water can only boil, and it does so at 212° of the thermometer.

*Why should the pan be uncovered in boiling weak soups?*

Because the watery particles then escape more easily.

*Why is Papin's digester used in making soups?*

Because it prevents the loss of heat by evaporation, and greatly increases the solvent power of water heated in it. Thus, animal bones are dissolved with great facility in these digesters, in order that the

gelatine contained in them may be converted into rich soups, &c.

*Why do soups, pies, puddings, &c, keep hot much longer than equal bulks of mere fluids?*

Because fluids in general transfer heat less readily in proportion as they are more thick; whatever impedes the motion of the fluid particles diminishing the diffusing power.

*Why is salt beef reddened by boiling in hard water?*

Because of the additional salts which render the water harder.

#### BREAD-MAKING.

*Why is wheat more nourishing than other grain?*

Because it contains a larger quantity of gluten, which is an extremely nutritive substance.

*Why is rice a good substitute for wheat flour?*

Because it contains a great deal of nutriment in a small compass, and does not pass quickly off the stomach.

*Why does a stiff dough of flour and water soon turn sour?*

Because the water undergoes the acetous fermentation, and becomes vinegar?

*Why is yeast used in making bread?*

Because it lightens it, by inflating the dough in all parts with fixed air, or carbonic acid.

*Why is baked bread lighter than dough?*

Because part of the water is expelled by the heat of the oven in baking.

*Why is brown bread recommended to invalids?*

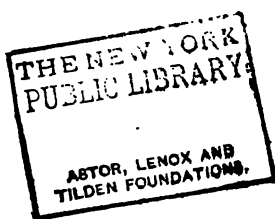
Because it is of an aperient nature, from the bran which it contains possessing a resinous purgative matter.

*Why is barley bread much less nutritious than wheaten bread?*

Because barley contains much less gluten than







wheat ; and the nutritiveness of the grain is in proportion to its gluten.

*Why is salt used in making bread ?*

Because of its flavour, and causing the dough to rise better ; and its stiffening the clammy dough made from new flour, and giving it a fair colour when otherwise it would be foxy.

*Why are there two sorts of crust in a loaf ?*

Because the *under* surface (or crust) rests on a tile floor of the oven, which being a bad conductor of heat, scorches it very little, but the *upper* surfaces of the loaf being all exposed to the direct influence of the hot air of the oven, are considerably scorched.

*Why is alum used in making bread ?*

Because it is said to whiten ill-coloured flour, and to harden and whiten bread made from flour which has been malted. By fraudulent persons it is used as an adulteration : for a large quantity of it added to the dough enables it to absorb, conceal, and retain much more water than it otherwise would. Bread made from such dough will come out from the oven much heavier than it ought, and the additional weight will be merely water. Two adhering loaves of such bread will generally separate unevenly, one taking more from the other than its share.—*Donovan.*

*Why is the fermentation of bread presumed to be vinous ?*

Because it depends upon the saccharine ingredient of the flour, and the known laws of the decomposition of sugar. The production of spirit, in the course of the fermentation of bread, in baking, which has been found to take place, is perhaps the most irrefragable proof of this theory. Flour kneaded without yeast, fermented in the usual way, and enclosed in a distillatory apparatus, has yielded the taste and smell of spirit ; and, by repeated rectification, spirit has been thus obtained of strength sufficient to burn, and to fire gunpowder.

## MEAT AND SOUPS.

*Why is the consumption of animal food so much greater in England than in France?*

Because England not only surpasses France in the number of cattle, but the animals are also finer, and their flesh is of better quality ; so that the inhabitant of England may consume nearly double the animal substance which France supplies to each of its inhabitants, with the further advantage of better quality.

*Why is meat preserved by drying?*

Because all bodies, to ferment, must be more or less moist. Thus, a piece of meat, with all its natural juices, will soon putrify ; whereas bodies completely dry cannot be made to undergo any kind of fermentation.

*Why do smoked provisions keep better than those which are dried?*

Because of the impregnation of pyroligneous acid which the former receive from the smoke; turf smoke being generally employed ; and turf, by distillation in close vessels, affording pyroligneous acid. — *Donovan.*

*Why is a certain soup called Mulgatawnny?*

Because of its origin from the Indian *mulga* pepper, and *tanee* water ; the original soup being merely pepper water, without any meat whatever.

*Why is habitual drinking especially fatal to the interests of cooks?*

Because nothing so soon destroys the palate or taste, which is necessary even for the most experienced cooks, to ascertain the flavour and seasoning of their soups, sauces, &c.

*Why does charcoal prevent meat, &c, becoming tainted?*

Because it absorbs the different gases of putrefaction, and condenses them in its pores, without any alteration of their properties or its own.

*Why is baking the least advantageous of all modes of cookery?*

Because meat thus dressed loses about one-third of its weight, and the nourishing juices are then, in great measure, dried up. Beef in boiling loses 26lb in 100lb; in roasting it loses nearly one-third.

#### FERMENTED LIQUORS.

*Why are some fermented liquors lighter than water?*

Because, during fermentation, the heavy saccharine matter gives place to the light fluid alcohol, or spirit.

*Why is carbonic acid gas produced in the process of fermentation?*

Because in all vinous fermentations a decomposition of the saccharine matter takes place; and a part of the disengaged oxygen, uniting with a part of the carbon of the sugar, forms carbonic acid. A decomposition also of part of the water of solution perhaps promotes the process. — *Parkes.*

*Why are liquors cleared by fermentation?*

Because, during the process, a thick froth of air bubbles, and viscid matter rises to the surface, and after remaining there some time, it parts with the air which floated it, and the viscid matter subsides to the bottom.

#### BREWING.

*Why is beer believed to be of the same antiquity with wine?*

Because the word *beer* seems to be of Hebrew origin: thus, the Hebrew for *corn*, with a very slight modification, sounds like *bre* in *sabre*, or *ber*. The Hebrew language modified itself into the Phœnician, and that again into the Saxon: accordingly the Saxon *bepe*, *barley*, resembles its Hebrew parent: hence we have the English *beer*, the French *bière*, and the Italian *birra*. The Saxon word has been retained in English; for there is a kind of barley called *bere*, or *bigge*. The English word *beer* was, a few centuries ago, spelt *bere*; and beer has at all times been made

from barley ; hops are a modern improvement. We may therefore incline to believe, that the etymology of the word not only proves the remote antiquity of the beverage, but traces the invention to the family of Noah.

*Why is the month of October an unfit time for brewing, although famous for the manufacture of English beer ?*

Because in October river water is generally unfit for use, it being then loaded with vegetable decompositions and living animalculæ, neither of which are favourable to the fermentation.

*Why does the water of stagnant ponds produce better beer than that of the finest springs ?*

Because, probably, of its softness, whilst its impurities are separated in the course of the fermentation. — *Neuman.*

*Why is water only warm used for the first mashing ?*

Because it is not of sufficient temperature to dissolve away the coarser and more disagreeable parts of the grain. Hence the first wort from good malt is not only by far the strongest and sweetest, but it is of most delicate flavour, and will produce the nicest drink.

*Why is it requisite to stir about the malt and water in mashing ?*

Because if both remained undisturbed, the malt would subside to the bottom : it would part with its saccharine matter to the water immediately next to it ; would saturate it ; and, the water thus saturated being heavier, would remain at the bottom with the malt. This portion of the water could not dissolve any more, consequently, the remainder of the saccharine matter would remain unextracted from the malt, and the upper portion of the water would remain unimpregnated. In large breweries, this stirring is done by rake-machinery. — *Donovan.*

*Why is a thin bottomed copper advantageous in brewing ?*

Because it is much more easily heated, and less liable to wear, than a thick one. The inner surface of the bottom can never be hotter than the fluid it contains: the outer surface is, of course, as hot as the flame which envelopes it. In a liquor copper, therefore, the inside can never exceed the heat of boiling water; and if we could imagine a copper bottom to be infinitely thin, the heat of the side next the fire would be absorbed, by passing through the fire, as fast as it was generated.

*Why, in brewing, is it advantageous to cool worts in coolers quite open to the sky, in clear nights?*

Because wort is a good radiator of heat, and may thus be cooled eight or ten degrees lower than the temperature of the atmosphere; owing to the rays of heat which, in such a case, radiate from the wort, not being returned again from the clear sky. — *Ency. Brit.*

*Why is the cooler generally considerably elevated in a brewery?*

Because it is not then overhung by other buildings, that might retard the evaporation, and obstruct the current of air.

*Why is rapid cooling important?*

Because of preventing the souring, which would certainly take place, if the wort were allowed to remain even at a high temperature, long enough to cool spontaneously.

*Why is yeast always much more bitter than the fermented wort from which it is obtained?*

Because the bitter principle of hops is not very soluble; and during the fermentation of wort, a bitter matter is thrown to the surface, enveloped in the yeast, which also rises and eventually remains there. Such is this bitterness, that porter brewers' yeast is unfit for the baker, unless it be washed with water: ale brewers' yeast answers well for bread; but that of the distillers is the best of all. — *Donovan.*

*Why should any particular quantity of yeast be determined by weight?*

Because the same bulk may consist of more or less real yeast, inflated more or less with fixed air.

*Why is excessive fermentation injurious to beer?*

Because, in proportion as alcohol is evolved, the sugar disappears; the mucilaginous viscosity of the liquor, which depends on the sugar, is lost; and, this once lost, the drink can no longer contain and envelope the carbonic acid, which imparts briskness, sharpness, and creaminess of head.

*Why do large tuns of wort sometimes turn sour?*

Because the heat spontaneously produced by the chemical changes which take place in so large a quantity of matter is considerable; and this, aided by the occasional excessive heat of the weather, renders the process sometimes unmanageable.

*Why is Muscovia glass used by brewers in fining and correcting stale beer?*

Because it is a mineral product, containing magnesia, and affording, on boiling, a considerable portion of gelatine. The magnesia neutralises, or destroys, a portion of the acetous acid in the stale beer; and the gelatine carries down with it all the suspended impurities. A pound is said to go as far in fining beer, as two pounds of isinglass.

*Why is marble powder the best corrector of sour beer?*

Because it generates carbonic acid in such small successive quantities as the beer can readily hold in solution, whilst carbonate of soda generates the carbonic acid all at once. Another advantage is, that when dissolved in the beer by the vinegar present, its taste, being rather bitter, corresponds with that of hops. — *Donovan.*

*Why does carbonate of soda restore sour and flat beer?*

Because carbonic acid is thus introduced.

*Why does small beer soon turn sour?*



Because it is the last wort: the saccharine matter diminishing sensibly towards the end, and at last disappearing altogether. Indeed, the last portions of worts often taste sour, when running from the malt. — *Thomson.*

*Why will table beer in warm weather burst bottles, while strong ale will not be affected?*

Because weak ales undergo a much more violent and unmanageable fermentation than strong ones.

*Why is indifferent beer vulgarly called 'Water bewitched'?*

Because of an old Scotch custom of throwing a little dry malt and a handful of salt on the top of the mash, 'to keep the witches from it.'

*Why are some drinking pots made with hoops on the outside?*

Because formerly the draught of each man in a company was measured by hoops.

#### ALE.

*Why does the peculiar flavour of beer depend upon the water with which it is brewed?*

Because of the different substances with which the water is impregnated.

Thus, the prohibitions of the legislature are often set at defiance, or thrown into ridicule: for, while the excise office shall be threatening, or prosecuting, one brewer, for putting a quarter of an ounce of copperas into a barrel of his porter, another brewer, under the survey of the same officer, shall have ten times that quantity dissolved, naturally, in the water which supplies his brewhouse. It is the same with carbonate of lime, common salt, and many other articles, which are strictly prohibited. — *Art of Brewing.*

*Why is Cerevisia Latin for beer or ale?*

Because of its derivation from Ceres, the goddess of corn, from which alone beer was anciently made.



*Why is ale so called?*

Because of its origin from the Danish word *oela*.

*Why is excellent ale to be made with sugar instead of malt?*

Because it is the sugar of the malt which undergoes fermentation, and any other sugar will ferment just as well, although no other sugar is so cheap. — Donovan.

*Why do ale-brewers usually put a handful of hops into the bung-hole of each cask, when stowing in the cellar?*

Because the atmospheric air is by that means excluded, by the surface of the liquid being covered.

*Why was paleness in ales formerly much prized?*

Because they were intended thus to imitate the white wines of the Continent.

*Why do brewers put crabs' claws, egg shells, &c, into their spring-brewed ales?*

Because of the power of those articles to absorb the first germs of the acid fermentation.

*Why is strong ale improved by bottling?*

Because it retains good body, and unaltered saccharine matter enough to permit a slow and long-continued fermentation; during which time it becomes mellow to the taste, and highly vinous.

*Why are certain ales called XX (double X) and XXX (treble X)?*

Because, originally, all ale or beer, sold at or above ten shillings per barrel, was reckoned to be strong and was therefore subject to a higher duty. The cask which contained this strong beer was the first marked with an X, signifying *ten*; hence the present quack-like denominations of XX and XXX.

*Why was ale formerly spiced?*

Because it was thus not only flavoured, but preserved: cloves are said to prevent ale turning so

*Why is the manufacture of mead discontinued?*

Because of the high price of honey, from the excise duty imposed on it; and the extension of agriculture diminishing the food of bees.

*Why are Burton, Nottingham, and other towns on the Trent, so celebrated for their ales?*

Because the water with which the ales are made, runs over a rock of gypsum, or carbonate of lime; the hardness of the water being in these, as well as other instances, favourable to the manufacture.

The same brewer cannot, with the same malt, produce an equal beer, in any other part of the kingdom.\*

The Barnstaple and Liverpool ales, and some others also of excellent quality, are brewed with hard water. The Derby malt, much used in Lancashire, is found to make better beer in that county than in Derbyshire, and it may be supposed that the Lancashire waters, generally containing much carbonate and sulphate of lime, occasion the difference.

#### PORTER.

*Why was beer first called 'entire,' and 'porter?'*

Because of the following circumstances.—Before the year 1730, the malt liquors in general use in London were ale, beer, and two-penny; and it was customary for the drinkers of malt liquor to call for a

\* A curious circumstance lately occurred in connexion with one of the able treatises published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, in 'the Art of Brewing,' the author of which treatise stated that gypsum and chalk were used in the manufacture of Burton ale. The ale-brewers at Burton, conceiving themselves aggrieved by this charge of sophistication, commenced an action against the Society, in the Court of King's Bench. This action was, however, withdrawn, when it was urged by Mr Brougham, that the author of the treatise had stated this as a fact, because he had been unable to prepare ale similar to the Burton, without the admixture of these ingredients. An experienced chemist was subsequently sent to Burton, to whom every facility was afforded by the brewers, and who found that these substances were largely contained in natural solution in the water with which the brewery was supplied, and which takes its rise in a gypsum rock. With an understanding that this explanation should be published in each succeeding treatise, the action was withdrawn by the counsel for the prosecution.

pint, or tankard, of half-and-half, that is, a half of ale and a half of beer, a half of ale and half of twopenny, or half of beer and half of twopenny. In course of time it also became the practice to call for a pint, or tankard, of *three threads*, meaning a third of ale, of beer, and of twopenny; and thus, the publican had the trouble to go to three casks, and turn three cocks for a pint of liquor. To avoid this inconvenience and waste, a liquor was made which should partake of the same united flavours of ale, beer, and twopenny, which was called *entire* or *entire-butt*; and as it was a very hearty and nourishing liquor, it was very suitable for *porters* and other working people: hence it obtained the name of **PORTER**.

*Why are various bitters substituted for hops in porter?*

Because the bitter contained in porter is so great, that if taken wholly from hops, it would require an average of ten or twelve pounds to the quarter of malt, or about three pounds per barrel; whereas, by the above means, the brewer can procure as much bitter for sixpence, as from hops will cost him twenty shillings.

*Why is quassia a favourite bitter in adulterating porter?*

Because the smell, if any, is imperceptible; and the bitter is intense, pure, and lasting, in a quantity of about an ounce to a barrel.

*Why is coculus Indicus used by fraudulent brewers in adulterating beer?*

Because of its strong narcotic principles. Thus, the berries are sometimes thrown into water for the purpose of catching fish, which, by swallowing them, become intoxicated and stupified.

*Why has some porter a close, creaming foam or head?*

Because it has the right degree of viscosity, which a due quantity of malt and a proper fermentation always impart.

*Why has other porter froth, which, when blown asunder on the surface, does not reunite?*

Because it contains *heading stuff*, composed of isinglass and sourish porter whisked into a froth before it is mixed with the beer.

*Why is green copperas a harmless addition to produce heading on porter?*

Because it is only necessary to dissolve two spoonfuls of copperas in each hogshead, which is decomposed as soon as dissolved, as its elements cannot remain in combination at this degree of dilution; and even if it were not decomposed, the quantity of a grain and a half to each gallon, could not have any injurious tendency. — *Donovan.*

*Why does porter drink better out of a pewter or tin pot, than from glass or earthenware?*

Because of the galvanic influence of the green copperas, (used to give it a frothy top,) and the metal, on the lips; thus forming, as it were, the elements of a galvanic pile.

#### MALT AND HOPS.

*Why is barley superior to other grain for malt?*

Because it more readily germinates, and suffers the conversion of its starch into sugar more easily.

*Why is barley, prepared for brewing, called malt?*

Because it is then mellowed or sweetened, so as to taste something like what the Latins call *mel*, and we term honey.

*Why has malt a sweetish taste?*

Because, in *malting*, the starch of the grain is converted into sugar during the germination of the seeds.

*Why is summer a bad time for malting?*

Because the natural heat of the weather, with the heat from the grain in malting, would conjointly produce bitter and comparatively valueless, instead of sweet, malt.

*Why does pale malt afford the strongest and best beer?*

Because it contains the saccharine principle in perfection.

*Why was beer formerly made of a paler colour than at present?*

Because it was the practice, instead of using the kiln for drying malt, to spread it out before the sun, which soon dried it, and left it perfectly pale in colour.

*Why is wood-fuel objectionable for kiln-drying malt?*

Because, during the combustion of the wood, pyroligneous acid is generated, which may communicate acetic acid to the malt, and this may inoculate wort made from it with the acetous fermentation.

*Why is high dried malt used for brewing porter?*

Because by a brisk heat pyroligneous acid is generated in the malt, without being expelled; and worts made from such malt, will retain a certain sharpness or sourness, sometimes much valued in porter, when not too redundant.

*Why should malt be only ground a day or two, before it is wanted for brewing?*

Because all sorts of meal are apt to heat by reason of a fermentation that would terminate in putridity.

*Why is malt only coarsely ground?*

Because it is then less apt to *set*, than if in fine powder.

*Why are hops used in beer?*

Because the aroma and bitterness of the hop take off the mawkishness of fermented worts, and prevent the beer from becoming sour.

Gervase Markham says: 'The generall use is by no means to put any *hops* into *ale*: making that the difference between it and *beere*, that the one hath *hops*, and the other none: but the wiser husiues do find an error in that opinion, and say that the vtter want of hops is the reason why ale lasteth so little a time, but either dyeth or soureth, and therefore they will to euery barrell of the best ale allow half a pound of good hops.' — *Maison Rustique*, 1616.



*Why was a pillow stuffed with hops formerly recommended for easing pain?*

Because of the narcotic and stupefying effects of the hops, which soon produced sleep.

*Why are hops heavily pressed and closely packed?*

Because it is believed to preserve their strength in keeping: if not so packed, they would become damp, and sometimes mouldy.

*Why are old hops comparatively of little value?*

Because the fine flavour of hops does not exist a twelvemonth. Beyond that time they are *old hops*; and are sold at a cheaper rate to the porter brewer. A year or two longer, and the bitter itself disappears, and the whole becomes nothing better than chaff. The same deterioration takes place when infused in the beer. The flavour is but of momentary duration, and the *bitter principle* gradually decays.

*Why were bitters originally introduced into beer or porter?*

Because the *leeches* of former times recommended certain plants to be infused in the malt liquor, which herbs were generally the bitterest and most nauseous that could be found; but they cured diseases, and were, therefore, not only tolerated, but sought after; and, in process of time, some of them became necessary to certain tastes, and exist in the beer or porter which we now drink. The general opinion is, that hops were first used to preserve beer from acidity, but bitter ingredients were used by our forefathers, before hops were considered proper for the purpose.

#### CIDER.

*Why is the fermented juice of apples called cider?*

Because of its origin from the Roman *sicera*, which colloquially pronounced, is *sidera*. In like manner, perry, or pear water, from the Latin *pyrum*.

*Why is common cider rough and sour?*

Because the fermentation is complete, and its preparation in this manner, gives so much less trouble.

*Why is rough cider stronger than that which is sweet?*

Because in rough cider the sugar is all decomposed, and a greater portion of alcohol is produced.

*Why is the best cider made from judiciously mixed apples?*

Because the requisite qualities of richness, astringency and flavour, are thus obtained, which seldom can be had from one kind. — *T. A. Knight.*

*Why do not cider and perry rank as wines?*

Because they contain so much malic acid, which is injurious to the fermentation requisite for wine. The acid in the grape is chiefly tartaric.

#### WINE MAKING.

*Why is the manufacture of wine believed to be of high antiquity?*

Because Noah, it appears from Genesis ix, 21, became drunk with the produce of his own vineyard; and, as it is reasonable to suppose he was well acquainted with all the discoveries of his progenitors, we may infer that it was not the first instance in which the cultivation of the vine was practised, and the intoxicating quality of the grape experienced.

*Why was the invention of wine probably coeval with the grape?*

Because the delicious sweetness of the grape juice suggested its separation from the fruit, as a drink. The principle of fermentation is present in the grape: the juice, if kept a few hours, will spontaneously ferment; and the singular appearance of the effervescence, resembling boiling in the cold, would sufficiently stimulate curiosity to complete the process. The enlivening effects of the liquor when vinous, would also assist. It is, therefore, very probable,





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that wine was discovered nearly 6000 years since, very shortly after the creation of the world.

*Why is it probable that wine was the primitive drink of mankind?*

Because it is concluded that its name was much the same word as is used to express it by Moses in Gen. ix, 21, from the Hebrew word for pressing out. The similarity of the name in most known languages also favours this conclusion: from the Hebrew word for wine we trace the Greek, and thence *vinum* in Latin, *vino* in Italian and Spanish, *vin* in the French, *wein* in the Gothic, *gwin* in the Welsh, *win* in the Cymbric, *vvin* in the old German, *vvin* in the Danish, *wiin* in the Dutch, and *wine* in the English.

*Why is wine made by fermentation?*

Because the sugar is entirely decomposed, and the only products resulting from it are carbonic acid and alcohol. The changes which take place during this process may be thus briefly expressed: some of the carbon and some of the oxygen combine to form carbonic acid; while the remainder of the carbon, the remainder of the oxygen, and the whole of the hydrogen, combine to form alcohol; the decomposition of the yeast amounting to very little. — *Donovan*.

*Why does must, or grape-juice, ferment faster in large than small casks?*

Because the heat produced in the large cask is so much greater than that in the small. In the large cask, however, there is more loss of alcohol and aroma, upon which the goodness of the wine so much depends. — *Chaptal*.

*Why is the treading of grapes essential to a perfect fermentation of the must?*

Because when a grape is gently squeezed, the sweetest portion of the pulp only is obtained, and this juice ferments but little; whereas, by increased and continued pressure, the extractive and more acid

contents are forced out, and due admixture with the saccharine principles is thereby effected.

*Why are white wines prepared from red grapes?*

Because the must is separated from the husk of the grape before it is fermented, whence the wine has little or no colour.

*Why do red grapes also produce red wines?*

Because the skins are allowed to remain in the must during the fermentation, when the spirit dissolves the colouring matter of the husks, and the wine is thus coloured.

*Why is not artificial yeast added to wine made from grape-juice?*

Because a yeast exists naturally in the juice, which thus spontaneously enters into fermentation.

*Why is wine rolled, and returned on the lees to feed?*

Because it renders the wine stronger and better, by re-exciting the languid fermentation. The scum or head is thus broken, and mixed with the fermenting fluid, and a dry wine produced.

*Why does isinglass added to the wine, prevent its excessive fermentation?*

Because it precipitates the yeast, and thus prevents it from doing further mischief.

*Why is fish-glue, as it is improperly called, also called isinglass?*

Because it is corrupted from the Dutch *hyzenblas*, an air-bladder, compounded of *hyzen*, to hoist, and *blas*, bladder; it being chiefly prepared from the sounds, swims, or bladders of sturgeon. — *Booth's Analytical Dictionary.*

*Why is tartar procured from vessels in which much wine has been kept?*

Because tartaric acid is a necessary substance all wine; and must will not ferment if all the tartaric acid be taken from it.

*Why does olive oil, poured in a cask of wine, preserve it in draught ?*

Because the oil, spread in a thin layer upon the surface of the wine, prevents the evaporation of its spirituous part, and hinders its mixing with the atmospheric air, which would not only turn the wine sour, but change its constituent parts.

*Why does wine crust in the wood ?*

Because of the constant evaporation, varying according to the wood of the cask, and the surrounding temperature. In casks of chestnut, it evaporates rapidly ; in those of mulberry, oak, and other close-grained woods, it proceeds more slowly : it occurs, however, in all of these, which accounts for the vinous odour in a cellar where wines are stored in the wood, however thick the casks, and however carefully they may be bunged.

*Why do wines diminish in quantity, but increase in value, by keeping in the wood ?*

Because the wood allows water, but not spirit, to pass through, or evaporate. Hence wines, by keeping in wood, become more spirituous, and what they lose in quantity they more than gain in quality.

*Why does old wine crust in the bottle ?*

Because the precipitation of the tartar continues in a slight degree even after fermentation, and, in the red wines, generally carries with it a quantity of the colouring matter, forming a dark *crust* on that side of the bottle which happens to be undermost. In white wines, on the other hand, the tartar appears in crystals on the cork and side of the vessel. This precipitation is evidently owing to the more thorough union that takes place between the other component parts of the wine, as it increases in age. The salt is but little soluble in water, and not at all in alcohol. In proportion, therefore, as the alcohol is evolved, and incorporated with the aqueous principle of the wine, this salt is gradually

separated in a solid form, bearing with it the other ingredients that may be of equally difficult solution.

— *Henderson.*

*Why is newly bottled wine or beer laid down, or on the side?*

Because the corks are then kept swelled, so that nothing can enter from without.

*Why is wine speedily matured by closing the bottles with bladder instead of corks?*

Because the bladder permits the evaporation of the watery parts of the wine, but prevents that of the alcohol; hence the strength of wine is improved, and the deposition of the acid salts or *crust* accelerated.

*Why are white wines soonest brought to perfection in moderately sized casks?*

Because their maturity depends on the concentration of the more solid constituents. For example, two samples of sherry, of the same vintage, were shipped at Cadiz in the same condition, but the one in butt, and the other in half-butt, or hogshead, — the latter on its arrival in England, proved of a more mellow and delicate quality than the former. — *Henderson.*

*Why is wine most liable to turn sour in spring and autumn?*

Because at those seasons the fermentation is often renewed by frequent and sudden changes of temperature, which cause a corresponding expansion or condensation of the body of liquor, and of the air in the cask.

*Why are wines materially improved by a voyage?*

Because the heat and agitation of a voyage accelerate the imperceptible fermentation, and ripen wines more speedily.

*Why is port wine astringent and slightly rough?*

Because of the husks with which it is coloured. The husk is, however, capable of communicating but a light red colour; when the red is deep, it is artifi-

cial; and a deep red colour is never a desirable quality. — *Donovan.*

*Why is port wine most commonly exported in full pipes?*

Because port being of a strong and full body, and containing much mucilaginous extractive matter, the secondary fermentation is quickened by the greater bulk of the fluid, and the wine is thus most effectually mellowed in large vessels.

*Why are brandied port wines of inferior quality?*

Because the original wines being of inferior growth, would not bear sea-carriage without some preparation, and the shipper is forced to mix them with brandy, which, though it may prevent them from spoiling, renders them otherwise worse than before, as it destroys what little flavour they originally possessed.

*Why are first-rate French wines obtained purer than any others?*

Because mixing them with inferior sorts would almost entirely destroy the delicate flavours for which they are chiefly prized, and the value of the compound would not compensate the sacrifice it required.

*Why does champagne sparkle in the glass, unlike other wines?*

Because it is bottled before the fermentation is completed: part of the sugar remains undecomposed, and the fermentation goes on slowly in the bottle till the cork is drawn.

*Why are red champagne wines generally inferior to white?*

Because the species of fermentation required to extract the colour, dissipates part of the flavour.

*Why is champagne, except in cases of weak digestion, one of the safest wines that can be drunk?*

Because its intoxicating effects are rapid, but exceedingly transient, and depend partly upon the carbonic acid, which is evolved from it, and partly upon



the alcohol, which is suspended in this gas, being applied rapidly and extensively to a large portion of the stomach.

*Why is claret so called?*

Because of its origin from *claretum*, a liquor made anciently of wine and honey, clarified by decoction.

*Why do new wines intoxicate more than old wines?*

Because the spirit of new wines is not so intimately combined as in old wines, and accordingly exerts its influence more freely.

*Why does wine intoxicate less than the quantity of brandy which it would afford on distillation?*

Because the brandy is held in chemical combination, and its qualities are modified by the other combined substances. Hence, the effects of spirits are sudden, violent, and transitory; those of wine are gradual, gentle, and lasting. — *Donovan*.

*Why is the blackthorn or sloe important in the tricks of trade?*

Because, by some knavish dealers, the leaves are used to adulterate and to give a rough flavour to tea; the berries of the sloe likewise enter pretty largely into the composition of much of the wine that is miscalled port.

The following is stated, by a London chemist, to be an analysis of a cheap commodity, sold under the denomination of port wine: spirit of wine, 3 oz.; cider, 14 oz.; sugar, 1½ oz.; alum, 2 scruples; tartaric acid, 1 scruple; strong decoction of logwood, 4 oz.

*Why is sugar of lead used by fraudulent dealers to restore some wines?*

Because it stops fermentation and putrefaction in the wine, without altering its colour. The sugar of lead might be thus very well employed, if lead and all its preparations were not pernicious to health; as they occasion colics, and even death, when taken internally. Alkalis, as potash and soda, would correct this

acidity; but these substances give to wine a dark greenish colour, and a taste, which though not acid, is sometimes disagreeable. Besides, they accelerate considerably the total destruction and putrefaction of the wine. Dr Ure observes, that when wine is sour, 'it cannot, by any good method, be remedied; and that nothing remains to be done with sour wine, but to sell it to vinegar makers, as all honest wine merchants do.'

*Why is icing wines a delicate process?*

Because every different kind of wine requires a different degree of cold and warmth. Thus, claret, coming immediately out of the cellar, has not that soft and delicious flavour which gives it its peculiar value. The bottle should be placed, before drinking, where it may obtain warmth; in winter before the fire: but Burgundy should be drank fresh from the cellar. Champagne gains strength by cold, but parts with some of its tendency to effervesce, when iced. Sillery champagne is, however, usually drank iced. — *Henderson*.

*Why does a quantity of wine diluted intoxicate sooner than the same quantity drank in the same time without dilution?*

Because the wine being applied to a large surface of the stomach, acts with proportionally greater quickness: though wine diluted sooner intoxicates, its effects are sooner over. — *Kitchener*.

*Why is wine and water called negus?*

Because of its origin from Francis Negus, Esq., in the reign of George the First; when a party of Whigs and Tories having assembled to drink wine, fell into a high dispute, and Mr Negus being present, recommended them in future to dilute their wine as he did: this suggestion changed the argument to one on wine and water, which concluded by their nicknaming the drink 'Negus.'



*Why are wine bottles of a green colour?*

Because of the portion of iron in the ashes of vegetables, of which this kind of glass is partly made.

*Why is a machine for drawing corks called a cork-screw?*

Because it is the thread of a screw without the spindle, and is used not to connect opposing forces, but merely to enter and fix itself in the cork.

*Arnott.*

*Why is a cup of coffee beneficial after an excess of wine?*

Because it is gently stimulant and tonic, and thus restores the digestive powers which had been debilitated by the wine.

#### BRITISH WINES.

*Why are British wines so little esteemed?*

Because of a great radical defect in their manufacture; which is using too small a portion of fruit compared with the sugar employed. It is this circumstance which renders the fermenting process incomplete, and thus imparts that sweet and mawkish taste to our domestic wines, which renders them intolerable to many people, and even to all, perhaps, without the addition of brandy.

*Why is tartar recommended in making British wines?*

Because none of our fruits contain naturally sufficient tartar for a perfect fermentation.

*Why is brandy added to British wines?*

Because it is supposed to prevent them from turning sour, and enable them to keep longer; whereas, on the contrary, the brandy decomposes the wine, and although slow, the process is certain.—*Macculloch.*

*Why is it recommended to wash the wine vat with lime-water?*

Because lime corrects the predominance of acid in English fruits.

*Why was the best wine made in England formerly called 'Theologicum'?*

Because 'it was had from the clergie and religious men, vnto whose houses manie of the laitie would often send for bottles filled with the same, being sure that they would neither drinke nor be served of the worst, or such as was anie waies mingled or vined by the vintner: naie the merchant would have thought that his soule should have gone straightwaie to the devil, if he should have served them with other than the best.' — *Holinshed*, i, 282.

## SPIRITS.

*Why are spirits heaviest in winter?*

Because they expand, and become lighter by means of heat, in a greater proportion than water.

*Why has strong spirit, when mixed with water, a slight milky appearance?*

Because of the precipitation of the oil in the spirit.

*Why is new spirit better stored in wood than in glass or earthen vessels?*

Because wood mellows the raw flavour of the spirit, which glass or earthenware never improves.

*Why has all spirit 'a whiskey smell'?*

Because of a small quantity of fixed oil from the barley, which it contains.

*Why have Irish and Scotch whiskey a smoky flavour?*

Because turf is used in drying the malt from which it is distilled.

*Why is Ferintosh whiskey so celebrated?*

Because all barley produced on the Ferintosh estate was formerly privileged to be converted into whiskey, duty free; consequently, more whiskey was distilled in Ferintosh than in all the rest of Scotland. The word Ferintosh signifies Thane's land, it having been part of the Thanedom of Cawdor (Macbeth's) or Calder. The barony of Ferintosh belonged to the Forbes' of Culloden, and contained about

1800 arable acres. In 1784, Government made a sort of compulsory purchase of this privilege from the Culloden family: the sum paid was £21,500.

*Why is the Irish and Scotch spirit called whiskey?*

Because of its derivation from the word *usque*, from *usquebah*, the Irish *aqua vita*.

*Why is some brandy of darker colour than other?*

Because of the addition of burnt sugar, or from some matter dissolved away from the timber of the cask which contains it. Pure brandy, like any other pure spirit, has no colour.

*Why is French brandy only exported in oak casks?*

Because when exported in chestnut casks, although shipped of a strength above proof, it has, when it arrived in Holland or Germany, been found considerably under proof.

*Why is spirit of sugar called rum?*

Because of its derivation from the last syllable of the Latin word *saccharum* (sugar).

*Why is the spirit 'gin' so called?*

Because it is flavoured with the berries of the juniper: in Italian, *Ginebro*, or *Ginepro*, or *Ginevro*; and the French *Genèvre* corrupted into our word *Geneva*. The word *gin* is also associated with a name famous in poetry and romance — *Ginera*, or *Ginuera*, the favourite lady of Ariosto; which caused him to immortalize the juniper tree, as Petrarch did the laurel.

*Why is Kirsch-wasser so called?*

Because, in German, it signifies *cherry-water*: *kirsch*-wasser being an ardent spirit drawn from cherries.

*Why was spirit called 'aqua vitæ'?*

Because the old physicians attributed to it the important property of prolonging life.

*Why does a piece of potash, dissolving in spirits of wine, prove it to be adulterated?*

Because so strong is the attraction of the basis of

potash for oxygen, that it thus discovers and decomposes the smallest quantity of water in the spirit.

*Why do the workmen employed in cellars and distilleries appear habitually intoxicated?*

Because the vapour of alcohol, copiously inhaled in their lungs, produces the same effects as if it had been swallowed. This kind of intoxication is, however, transitory, and disappears when the person is brought into the open air.

*Why are deep cellars cool in summer and warm in winter?*

Because of the earth conducting heat but slowly, and frosts penetrating it but a few inches.

#### VINEGAR.

*Why is the well-known acid liquor called 'vinegar'?*

Because of its derivation from the French *vinaigre* — from *vin*, wine, and *aigre*, sour.

*Why is vinegar best made from wine?*

Because it contains less glutinous and mucilaginous matter than that prepared from malt or sugar.

*Why is French superior to English vinegar?*

Because in France vinegar is made from weak wine exposed to air and warmth simultaneously. The superiority of wine vinegar generally, has been just explained.

*Why is 'mothering' produced in vinegar?*

Because of the vegetable gluten it contains, which then begins to putrify.

*Why in making vinegar should the casks be only half filled?*

Because a large surface of the liquor may be exposed to the atmosphere, from whence the oxygen is to be derived to acidify it.

*Why is vinegar strengthened by freezing?*

Because only the weak and watery parts become ice, and the residue is pure acid. Mr Cobbett tells

us of a person in America 'who placed several hogsheads of cider out of doors; the frost turned to ice the upper contents, and a tap drew off from the bottom that which was not frozen. This was the spirituous part, and as strong as the very strongest beer that can be made. The top part, when turned, was weak cider.' — *English Gardener*.

*Why is vinegar boiled for pickling?*

Because the heat coagulates the impurities, which, when cooled, may be separated by straining.

*Why is vinegar (or pyroligneous acid) obtained by distilling wood?*

Because the wood chiefly consisting of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon, in certain proportions, and in a certain state of combination, the elements separate during the heating of the wood, and they recombine immediately after in different proportions, and give rise to new substances. Part of the oxygen and hydrogen combine and form water. Other parts of the oxygen and hydrogen combine each with a portion of carbon, and form two sets of compounds, carbonic oxide and carbonic acid, with carburetted and bicarburetted hydrogen; further portions of the carbon and oxygen, with a very small quantity of hydrogen, then combine, and produce acetic acid. The remainder of the carbon, and hydrogen, with a very small portion of oxygen, also unites, and produces a peculiar tar. The water, acetic acid, and the tar, all distill over together, in the form of what is called in common *pyroligneous acid*. The acid which comes over towards the end of the distillation, is the strongest portion; no doubt because the water which the timber contained has been at this time all volatilized. — *Donovan*.

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## FISH.

*Why are salmon and other fish preserved in summer by being packed up in boxes with ice?*

Because, although at a certain not very elevated temperature, dead animal substances putrify, when nearly their whole substance rises again to form part of the atmosphere, still, at or below the temperature of freezing water, they remain unaltered for any length of time.

*Why are cod-fish, salmon, &c, crimped alive?*

Because the crimping, by preventing the irritability of the fibre of the fish from being gradually exhausted, seems to preserve it so hard and crisp, that it breaks under the teeth; and a fresh fish not crimped is generally tough. — *Sir H. Davy.*

*Why is cod-fish directed to be boiled in hard water?*

Because it hardens, curdles, and keeps the whiteness of the fish, which will cut almost as fine as beef.

*Why are trout, salmon, and char, of a red colour?*

Because of a peculiarly coloured oil which they contain, and which may be extracted by alcohol; this accounts for the want of it in fish that have fed ill, and after spawning. Sir Humphry Davy gives this explanation, as the result of some experiments, made by an excellent angler, on the fat of fish. \*

*Why do salmon increase much slower than many other fish?*

Because they spawn in winter, and the young fry do not come forth till the spring; whereas the ova of some other fish, deposited in summer, become living fishes on the ninth day.

*Why are many shell-fish imagined to be poisonous?*

Because most shell-fish are indigestible, and from the indisposition caused occasionally by eating them, has arisen the idea of their being poisonous.

*Why are not whitebait known in the Thames above Blackwall?*

**Because they are salt water fish, and come and retire with the water, which is partially salt.**

*Why is it erroneous to consider the sprat the young of the herring and pilchard?*

Because, on comparing a sprat with a young herring of the same length, the sprat will be found to be considerably deeper, and the scales much larger; in this latter circumstance the sprat resembles the pilchard; but the pilchard, on the other hand, is not so deep a fish as the herring. The sprat and herring differ also in the number of rays in three of the fins out of four which they possess, and also in the tail; the vertebræ in the sprat, too, are forty-eight in number; in the herring they are fifty-six. — *Zoological Journal*.

*Why do putrifying fish emit a strong light in a dark room?*

Because of the numerous animalculæ, whose growth the putrefaction has promoted.

*Why do putrifying bodies emit a fetid smell?*

Because their solid and fluid parts are changed into gaseous matter and vapours, while their earthy particles remain.

#### FRUIT.

*Why are some fruits improved in sweetness by drying or half withering on the trees?*

Because their watery parts thus exhale, and the sugar is virtually increased in quantity.

*Why should grapes hang on the vine until they are perfectly ripe?*

Because unripe bunches never get any riper after they are gathered.

*Why should grapes be eaten soon after they are gathered?*

Because, unlike other fruits, grapes do not improve in flavour after gathering.

*Why should the crowns be removed from ripe pine-apples?*





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Because, when suffered to remain, they live upon the fruit till they have sucked out all the goodness.

*Why does an apple, when cut, first appear white, and after a time brownish?*

Because a fermentation arises from the rest of the fruit absorbing the oxygen of the atmosphere; the apple having previously been, by its tough skin, protected from the contact of the air. — *Donovan.*

*Why are certain apples called 'russetings'?*

Because of their russet or reddish brown colour.

*Why should raspberries be eaten from the bush?*

Because their flavour is the most fleeting of all fruit. Even a few hours will diminish it, and on the bush the flavour does not continue above two or three days after the fruit is ripe. If kept for two or three days when gathered, the flavour is almost entirely gone.

*Why has the barberry been banished from the hedgerows of England, where it formerly grew in great abundance?*

Because it was generally believed to be injurious to the growth of corn. This belief has been treated as a vulgar prejudice; but the fructification of the barberry is incomplete, unless the stamens be irritated by insects, when the filaments suddenly contract towards the germ. The flowers are therefore, by a beautiful arrangement of nature, peculiarly attractive to insects; and thus the barberry may become injurious to neighbouring plants.

*Why are chestnuts best preserved through winter in sand?*

Because, if there be any maggots in the chestnuts, they will come out, and work up through the sand to get air.

*Why is fern preferable to straw for the bed between the layers of fruit?*

Because it does not impart that musty flavour which is so often produced by the straw.

*Why are the autumnal fruits, as plums, pears, &c, more crude and indigestible than those of summer?*

Because, in part, of the state of the constitution. Thus, at the commencement of summer, the system is more nerved and braced by the atmosphere of winter and spring, and by the drier food which necessity obliges us to take at those seasons; so that the cooling fruits of summer are wholesome from their opening the bowels, &c. But it is not wonderful that a continuance of watery and innutritious food like fruit, should, towards the autumn, produce debility in constitutions partly predisposed to it, by the continual and relaxing heat of the summer months.

#### VEGETABLES.

*Why should juicy vegetables be kept in heaps in damp places?*

Because they are then preserved moist; but if spread out, the air soon causes them to shrivel.

*Why are the turnip, the radish, and the cabbage, considered very wholesome?*

Because of their high antiscorbutic powers, which depend upon a certain acrid volatile oily principle. This is particularly abundant in the seeds of mustard, and the roots of horse-radish; and in less degree in scurvy grass and the roots of the radish. Plants of this order are also believed to possess diuretic and diaphoretic properties; and they are always eatable when their texture is succulent and watery, as in the roots of the radish and turnip, and in the leaves of the cabbage tribe. — Loudon.

*Why are kitchen vegetables, as peas, French beans, &c, sometimes difficult to boil soft?*

Because of the great quantity of gypsum imbibed during their growth, and not on account of the coolness of the season, or rains, as has been generally supposed: to correct this, throw a small quantity of subcarbonate of soda in the saucepan

etables, the carbonic acid of which will seize upon the lime in the gypsum, and thus free the vegetables from its influence.

*Why should potatoes and similar roots be stored with the earth adhering to them?*

Because they are thus kept damp, whereas by removing the earth, the little fibres by which it is retained are wounded, and the evaporating surface is increased.

*Why are potatoes the most nourishing of all vegetables?*

Because of the quantity of starch they contain. Salop, tapioca, and sago, chiefly consist of starch, and are proportionally nutritious.

*Why are frost-bitten potatoes sweet?*

Because of the spontaneous conversion of the starch they contain into sugar.

*Why are potatoes unfit for cooking when they begin to spring?*

Because their fecula or starch then becomes sweet.

*Why are mealy potatoes more nutritious than those which are waxy?*

Because of the greater quantity of starch which they contain. Thus, a microscope shows a potatoe to be almost entirely composed of cells, which are sometimes filled, and sometimes contain clusters of beautiful little oval grains. Now, these little grains remain unchanged in cold water, but when it is heated to about the degree that melts wax, they dissolve in it, and the whole becomes a jelly, and occupies a larger space than it did in the form of grains. When a potatoe is boiled, then each of the cells becomes full of jelly, and if there be not a great quantity of starch in the cells, it will not burst. But if the number of grains or their size be very great, the potatoe is broken on all sides by the expansion of the little masses of jelly, and mealiness is produced.

Why do many persons become deeply affected after eating this?

Because it contains a milky juice, which, like opium, is a narcotic.

Why should water-cresses be carefully picked in washing?

Because a dangerous plant grows mixed with them, a sprig of water-cress, which, when not in flower, much resembles the cress. Water-cresses, are, however, of a deeper green, and sometimes spotted with white. The extremities of the leaves are more rounded at their edges. The dangerous plant (water-penny), is of an uniform green, the ends of its leaves are longer and narrower, pointed at the extremities, and notched at the edges. If examined in July, when the flowers are expanded, the two plants may be thoroughly distinguished.

Why do wholesome mushrooms differ from other fungi?

Because, when a fungus is pleasant in flavour, it is wholesome; if, on the contrary, it have an offensive smell, a bitter, astringent, or styptic taste, or is even of unpleasant flavour, it is unfit for food. Colour, figure, and texture cannot be relied on; yet the pure yellow, gold colour, bluish pale, dark or lustre brown, wine red, or the violet, belong to many that are antihelm; while the pale or sulphur yellow, bright or blood red, and the greenish, are generally poisonous. The safe kinds have mostly a compact, brittle texture; the flesh is white; they grow more readily in open places than in damp or wood-shaded spots. In general, those may be suspected which grow in excrement, on animal matter putrifying, as well as those whose flesh is watery. — Brande.

Why do weeds grow in sand, or on moistened flannel?

Because of the air, warmth, and water which they



*Why do many persons become sleepy after eating lettuce?*

Because it contains a milky juice, which, like opium, is a narcotic.

*Why should water-cresses be carefully picked in washing?*

Because a dangerous plant grows mixed with them in springs and streams, which, when not in flower, much resembles the cresses. Water-cresses, are, however, of a deeper green, and sometimes spotted with brown, the extremities of the leaves are more brown, and especially the last leaves, which are undulated at their edges. The dangerous plant (water parsnip) is of an uniform green, the ends of its leaves are longer and narrower, conical at the extremities, and toothed at the edges. If examined in July, when the flowers are expanded, the two plants may be thoroughly distinguished.

*Why do wholesome mushrooms differ from other fungi?*

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*Why is pepper so important an article of East India trade?*

Because in some years above six million pounds weight of black pepper have been sold at the India Company's sales, of which seven or eight hundred thousand have been retained for home consumption. — *Miss Kent.*

*Why do cloves appear like buds?*

Because they are the flowers of a tree before their expansion. The fruit is a very different thing, and quite unknown in commerce.

*Why is pimento called allspice?*

Because the berries smell and taste like cloves, juniper berries, cinnamon, and pepper, or rather a mixture of them all. The leaves and bark of the allspice tree are full of aromatic inflammable particles, on account of which the growers are extremely cautious not to suffer any fire to be made near the walks, for if it once catch the trees, they consume with great rapidity.

*Why is arrow root so called?*

Because the Indians use its juice as a remedy for wounds inflicted by poisonous arrows. It is also considered an excellent remedy for the stings of venomous insects.

*Why are there different qualities of arrow-root?*

Because of the number of washings it has had for bleaching it. When well washed with good water, it is nearly as white as the potatoe starch; but, by much washing its glutinous quality is diminished, and it is consequently rendered less nutritious. The second quality, which is equally pure, although not so white, affords the strongest jelly, and, therefore, as a food for children, should be preferred.

*Why does potatoe flour differ from arrow-root?*

Because it is whiter, softer to the touch, and more

shining to the sight, than arrow root; and though, with boiling water, it forms a good jelly, in twelve hours it becomes nearly as thin as milk, and is apt to turn sour.

*Why are East Indian better than West Indian tamarinds for medicinal purposes?*

Because the East Indian tamarinds are preserved without sugar, and contain more acid than any other vegetable substance, in a natural state.

*Why should rice be kept in large piles or quantities?*

Because the heat will not then allow insects to live in the inside of the heap; consequently, the great wastage takes place at the outside surface. Keeping rice, therefore, for any length of time, either in small piles or in bags, is ruinous.

*Why should old pearl and Scotch barley be washed before used?*

Because by long keeping it becomes mealy on the surface, and the meal is generally musty and sour.

*Why is barley freed from its bran for domestic purposes?*

Because the bran contains a resin of a purgative, and even acrimonious nature. Thus, Scotch, French, or pearl barley, is merely common barley, kiln-dried, and deprived of its husks or bran by a mill; the grains are then rounded, and cut down smaller, and lastly, whitened in their own meal.

*Why is lemon-juice altered by keeping?*

Because the mucilaginous matter which it contains is very soon altered by spontaneous decomposition.

*Why are capers wholesome?*

Because they are stimulating, antiscorbutic, and aperient. The bark of the root of the common caper passes for a diuretic medicine.

#### CONFECTIONARY.

*Why are fruits preserved by simply putting them in bottles made air-tight?*

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receive, the use of soil being quite secondary to the growth of seeds generally; although the soil at length becomes the proper means, by which alone the plant can arrive at perfection.

#### PLANTS IN ROOMS.

*Why will not plants flourish in close rooms?*

Because they require fresh and constant supplies of oxygen, of which there is but comparatively little in the atmosphere of the room.

*Why should not flowers in water, and living plants in pots, be kept in bedrooms?*

Because the flowers and plants greatly injure the purity of the air during the night, by giving out large quantities of carbonic acid, similar to that which is separated from the lungs, by breathing, which is highly noxious. There are instances of persons who have incautiously gone to sleep in a close room in which there has been a large growing plant, having been found dead in the morning, as effectually suffocated as if there had been a charcoal stove in the room.

*Why is not a parlour window an eligible place for bulbous roots in glasses?*

Because it is often too warm, brings on the plants too early, and causes them to be weakly. They should, however, be kept moderately warm, and near the light.

#### SPICES, &c.

*Why does black differ from white pepper, although produced from the same plant?*

Because the *black* is well garbled and clean, having stalks, bad grains, and other impurities taken out, and, when dry, assumes a dark appearance: divested of its external coat, by steeping the grains in water, and afterwards drying them in the sun, rubbing between the hands, and winnowing, — it is termed *white* pepper.

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Because the oxygen of the atmosphere, which causes all vegetable juices to ferment, is then excluded, except such oxygen as is enclosed within the bottle; this, from its contact with a fermentable substance, is changed into an equal bulk of carbonic acid gas, and all further action ceases.

*Why are fruits preserved by candying?*

Because of the antiseptic properties of sugar, which prevent the putrefaction of the juices.

*Why are eggs used for clarifying syrup?*

Because the albumen, or white of the egg, being coagulated in boiling, combines and rises in a scum with the dregs, when cold. The juice of the fruit of the ochra (*Hibiscus esculentus*) according to Dr Clarke, contains liquid albumen in such quantities, that it is employed in Dominica as a substitute for the white of eggs, in clarifying the juice of the sugar cane.

*Why do bitter almonds yield as tasteless an oil as those almonds which are sweet?*

Because all the bitter matter remains in the almond cake after the expression of the oil.

*Why is there considerable danger in spurious noyau or ratafia?*

Because it is flavoured with laurel leaves, the expressed juice of which is poisonous. A melancholy proof of this occurred not long since at Pisa, and is related by Mrs Starke, in her *Information for Travellers on the Continent*.—Two ladies were living together in that city, when one of them complaining of cramp in her stomach, the other gave her a wine glass of ratafia. Shortly after having swallowed it she died—so evidently in consequence of poison, that strong suspicions fell on her friend; who, to prove her innocence, took the same quantity of ratafia herself which she had administered to the deceased, and expired within a few hours. Prompted by this circumstance, Professor Santi, of Pisa, wrote a beautiful little work, to show that ratafia has of

ate years been made with Italian laurel leaves, the extract from which is deadly *poison*. The kernels of fruit stones are likewise used in ratafia, although they contain prussic acid.

*Why do rich cakes keep good for a long period?*

Because in making them, water is not used, which would soon turn sour; and sugar, of which they contain much, will not ferment unless it be dissolved in water.

*Why is ginger beer the most refreshing of all summer drinks?*

Because it retains its carbonic acid for a length of time in the glass; and ginger has this remarkable property of occasioning a high, close, creamy head upon all effervescing liquors. — *Donovan*.

#### MAKING TEA.

*Why is the distinction in the appearance, qualities, and value of tea?*

Because of the difference in the times of gathering, which takes place from one to four times in each year, according to the age of the plant: those leaves which are gathered earliest in the spring, make the strongest and most valuable tea, such as pekoe, souchong, &c; the inferior, such as congou and bohea, are of the latest gatherings; green or hyson can be made of any of the gatherings, by a different mode of drying. The first gathering of the leaves begins about the middle of April, and continues to the end of May: and the second lasts from midsummer to the end of July; the third takes place during the months of August and September.

*Why is fine green tea called hyson?*

Because it was first imported into England by an East India merchant named Hyson.

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*Why is tea kept by the Chinese a year before it is used?*

Because it may lose the narcotic principle which it possesses in its natural state.

*Why does the tea differ from the sloe leaf?*

Because the tea-leaf, after being infused and dried, will be found narrow in proportion to its length, and deeply notched at the edges, with a sharp point; whilst the sloe leaf is notched very slightly, darker in colour, round at the point, and of coarser texture.

*Why is a polished metal tea-pot preferable to one of earthenware?*

Because the earthen pot retains the heat only one eighth of the time that a silver or polished metal pot will; consequently, there will be a corresponding difference in their fitness for extracting the virtues of the tea.

*Why does a silver, or metal tea-pot, when filled a second time, produce worse tea than the earthenware vessel?*

Because the heat retained by the silver, or metal vessel, so far exhausts the herb, when the water is first poured in, as to leave very little soluble substance for a second infusion; whereas, the reduced temperature of the water in the earthenware pot, by extracting only a small portion at first, leaves some soluble matter for a second infusion.

*Why is it advisable to pour boiling water into the tea-pot before the tea is 'made'?*

Because the vessel being previously warm, may abstract less heat from the mixture, and thus admit a more powerful action.

*Why is it recommended to add only a small quantity of boiling water at first?*

Because only the water immediately in contact with the herb can act upon it; and it cools very rapidly, especially in earthenware vessels: it is therefore clear that the effect will be stronger where the heat is kept up by additions of boiling water, than

where the vessel is filled at once, and the fluid suffered gradually to cool.

*Why is a strong infusion of green tea an effectual poison for flies?*

Because of the prussic acid it contains.

#### COFFEE.

*Why is coffee so seldom well made in England?*

Because, 1st. The berries are over-roasted, their proper colour being that of cinnamon; 2d. The coffee is ground too fine; 3d. Not enough coffee is used; 4th. It is usually overboiled, by which means the bitter principle is extracted from the berries.

*Why are we in some measure indebted to the French for our present abundant supply of coffee?*

Because all the coffee grown in the West Indies has sprung from two plants taken thither by a French botanist from the botanic garden at Paris. On the voyage the supply of water became nearly exhausted; but so anxious was the Frenchman to preserve the plants, that he deprived himself of his allowance in order to water the coffee plants. Formerly coffee could only be got at a great expense from Mocha in Arabia.

#### TOBACCO.

*Why is the distinction between strong and mild tobacco?*

Because of the operation of *topping*, or cutting off the flower to prevent the plant from running to seed. Thus, if mild tobacco be wanted, the plant is topped when it has from eighteen to twenty leaves; if it be done when there are fifteen leaves, the tobacco will be of moderate strength; and if there are only eleven or twelve, it will be remarkably strong. The Haytian word *tobacco* appears to be the only one that is the same in all the dialects of the old world.

*Why is smoking tobacco an agreeable recreation?*

Because the smoke, merely drawn into the mouth, without being inhaled into the lungs, acts powerful-

ly on the nervous system, and produces the effects of a narcotic. The chewing of tobacco has a similar influence.

*Why are the qualities of tobacco cultivated in England likely to be acrimonious?*

Because tobacco is found mild in flavour in proportion to the heat of the climate in which it has grown. Its cultivation here is, however, prohibited by an act of Charles II, otherwise than to the extent of half a pole in a physic garden.

#### BUTTER, CHEESE, POULTRY, &c.

*Why is cream churned into butter?*

Because of the heat produced by churning, which thus changes the cream from a fluid to a solid.

*Why is a glass tube, called a cream gauge, used in dairies?*

Because when filled up to a certain height (ten inches) with new milk of a proper temperature, and then set by for twelve hours, the cream will have risen to the top of the tube, if the cow be a proper one from which to make butter.

*Why is lime important in the shells of birds' eggs?*

Because the body of the egg contains neither phosphoric acid nor lime, both of which are requisite for the bones of the bird; it was necessary, therefore, that nature should provide means of furnishing both these substances, which it does at the expense of the shell; this becoming thicker and thinner during the whole time of incubation, till the living embryo has appropriated a sufficient quantity for the formation of its bones. Part of the albumen combines with the shell for this purpose, and another portion forms feathers.

*Why are Dorking fowls distinguished from others?*

Because they have five claws; one sort is perfectly white, and another of a partridge colour. These have long been peculiar to Dorking; for Columella, a Roman

writer on agriculture, in the first century, describes fowls of this kind, so that it may reasonably be supposed the breed was originally brought here by the Romans. Blumenbach classes fowls with five or six toes among monsters with superfluous parts.

*Why do fowls, if kept confined, lay their eggs without shells?*

Because they cannot then get at any earth which contains the material requisite for the shell. Dr Paris, (in the *Linnæan Transactions*) shows that if the legs of hens be broken, they will lay their eggs without shells until the fracture is repaired; nature employing all the lime in circulation for the purpose of reuniting the bones.

*Why are certain small fowls called 'bantams'?*

Because they were first introduced here from Bantam in the Isle of Java, in the year 1683.

*Why are eggs preserved by rubbing them with butter?*

Because the butter closes the pores in the shell, by which the communication of the embryo with the external air takes place. The embryo is not, however, thus killed. Varnish has a similar effect. Reaumur covered eggs with spirit varnish, and found them capable of producing chickens after two years, when the varnish was carefully removed.

*Why is the colouring of cheese unobjectionable, provided it is genuine?*

Because the seed, or arnotta, by which the colouring is produced, is slightly purgative and stomachic. It is produced by a bush, or small tree, mostly tropical.

*Why is large grained and packing salt best adapted for curing fish, &c.*

Because it will remain permanently between the different layers, or will be very gradually dissolved by the fluids that exude from the provisions; thus furnishing a slow but constant supply of saturated

brine. For meat-brine the smaller grained varieties answer equally well.

*Why is a certain coarse salt called 'bay salt'?*

Because it is formed by the evaporation of sea-water in artificial *bays*, or shallow pans on the coast.

#### CLOTHING.

*Why have white veils a tendency to promote sun-burn and freckles?*

Because they increase the power of the sun's light.

*Why are white hats and dresses worn in summer?*

Because dark colours absorb most heat; white, therefore, repels most heat, and is cooler wear. A white dress in winter is good, because it radiates or receives little heat. Polar animals have generally light furs. White horses are both less heated in the sun, and less chilled in winter, than those of darker hues.

*Why does a flannel covering keep a man warm in winter, and ice from melting in summer?*

Because it both prevents the passage of heat from the man, and to the ice.

*Why is it advisable to wrap up the neck, face, &c, from the cold night air?*

Because the wrapping, especially if woollen, receives a portion of caloric or heat from the breath, at each expiration, which portion is communicated to the current of air rushing into the lungs at each inspiration.

*Why does a person with a cold in the head, or catarrh from the eyes and nose, experience so much more relief on applying to the face a linen or cambric handkerchief than one of cotton?*

Because the linen, by conducting, readily absorbs the heat and diminishes the inflammation, while the latter, by refusing to give passage to the heat, increases the temperature and the pain. Popular prejudice has held that there was a poison in cotton. — *Arnot.*

*Why does the sea air change black hats, clothes, &c, to a rusty brown?*

Because of the iron contained in the dye. Most, if not all, of the usual black colours, have iron for a basis, with galls, logwood, or other substances containing gallic acid. Now the sea-air contains a proportion of the muriates over which it is wafted; and these coming into contact with anything dyed black, part with their muriatic acid, and form the brown or red oxide, called rust. The gallic acid, indeed, from its superior affinity, has the strongest hold on the iron; but the incessant action of the sea air, loaded with muriates, partially overcomes this, in the same way as any acid, even of inferior affinity to the gallic, when put upon black stuff, will turn it brown.

*Why is loose clothing warmer than such as fits close?*

Because the quantity of imperfectly conducting air thus confined around the body, resists the escape of animal heat.

*Why is cotton warmer than any other fibrous threads?*

Because the fibres of cotton, when examined by the microscope, will be seen to be finely toothed: this explains the cause of their adhering together with greater facility than the fibres of other species which are destitute of teeth, and which cannot be spun into thread without an admixture of cotton.

*Why does oiled silk, or other air-tight covering, laid on a bed, preserve greater warmth than an additional blanket or more?*

Because the oiled silk prevents the ventilation of the person by the slow passage of air, as through the texture of the blanket.

*Why does worsted differ from yarn?*

Because separate threads of wool are more twisted for the worsted, of which stockings and stuffs are made, than for the yarn, of which blankets, carpets, &c, are made. Worsted was named from its being



originally manufactured in great quantities, at Worsted in Norfolk, once a large town, but now reduced to a village; the manufacture being removed to Norwich and its vicinity.

*Why is linen disadvantageous for wear next the skin?*

Because it retains the matter of perspiration in its texture, and speedily becomes imbued with it; it gives an unpleasant sensation of cold, is very rapidly saturated with moisture, and conducts heat too rapidly.

*Why is woollen cloth advantageous?*

Because of the readiness with which it allows the perspiration to escape through its texture, its power of preserving warmth to the skin under all circumstances, the difficulty of making it wet through, the slowness with which it conducts heat, and the softness, lightness, and pliancy of its texture.

*Why are blankets so called?*

Because they were first made in 1340, by one Thomas Blanket, and some other inhabitants of Bristol.

#### CLEANING.

*Why are alkalis employed in making soap?*

Because an alkali is the only article capable of enabling tallow or oil to combine with water, and to give soap its detergent quality. The tallow moderates the alkali, and prevents its injuring the hands of those who use it. The ancient Gauls and Germans were probably the inventors of soap, as we are told by Pliny that they made soap with the ashes of vegetables and tallow. A soap-boiler's shop, with soap in it, was discovered in the city of Pompeii, overwhelmed by Vesuvius, A.D. 79.

*Why is alkali used in bleaching?*

Because it loosens and carries off that particular substance in the cloth which occasions its brown colour, and which Dr Home says is a kind of heavy oil.

*Why are muslins and cottons thrown into pump water after being washed in soft?*

Because of the astringent properties of the hard water, which gives the fibres a peculiar firmness, whilst the soft water would leave them lax.

*Why is potash so called?*

Because it was formerly procured by burning vegetables in large iron *pots*. Potash is now prepared in large quantities in wine-countries, by the incineration of wine lees and must.

*Why is soda so called?*

Because it is procured by burning the plant *salsola soda*, which grows on the Spanish coast.

*Why do the properties of soda and potash differ in soap-making?*

Because, with soda, oil forms a hard soap; with potash a soft one.

*Why do pearl-ash and water remove grease spots?*

Because the pearl-ash unites chemically with the grease, forming a species of soap, which easily washes out.

*Why is pipe-clay used for scouring cloth?*

Because pure clay, or alumina, has great affinity for greasy substances.

*Why does fullers' earth remove grease spots?*

Because of the alumina which it contains.

*Why is alum used in dyeing?*

Because it cleanses and opens the pores on the surface of the substance to be dyed, rendering it fit for receiving the colouring particles, (by which the alum is generally decomposed) and at the same time making the colour fixed.

*Why do combs stained to imitate tortoiseshell, soon become dull?*

Because of the lead used in the dye resuming its usual metallic appearance.

*Why, in cementing, should bodies be heated before, and closely pressed together, after the cement is applied?*

Because very little of the cement may be left between the pieces, as the thinner the cement is spread, the firmer it will hold.

*Why should plated articles be kept dry?*

Because the coating of silver on them is so thin as not to prevent their speedily becoming cankered or rusted by damp.

*Why is quicksilver a dangerous ingredient of plate-powder?*

Because, although it gives a speedy polish, the silver cleaned with powder in which it is contained, soon tarnishes, and becomes so brittle as to break when let fall. Golden articles are also much injured from contact with quicksilver and mercurial preparations. Gold rings have been known to burst on the fingers using mercury or handling quicksilver. A genuine sovereign, dipped in quicksilver, partly silvered over, and afterwards rubbed with aqua-fortis, has been snapped asunder like a piece of rotten stick.

#### THE DRESSING-ROOM.

*Why is charcoal the best dentrifice?*

Because of its antiseptic properties and its destroying the smell of various substances; thus rendering it a ready sweetener of the breath.

*Why does tartar on the teeth destroy them?*

Because it consists of animalculæ, which produce decay and tooth-ache. Crab verjuice, diluted with water, will destroy them.

*Why may genuine carmine be safely used?*

Because it is made from cochineal.

*Why is spurious carmine usually heavier than genuine?*

Because it is adulterated with vermilion or red lead.

*Why are depillatories useless to destroy superfluous hairs?*

Because they only destroy the trunks of the hair ; the roots being left, the hairs will, of course, grow.

*Why does a hair drawn between the finger and thumb from the end to the root, give greater resistance, and a different sensation, to that caused by drawing the hair contrarywise?*

Because the hair is indented with teeth, resembling a coarse round rasp, but extremely irregular and rugged ; and these incline all in one direction, like those of a common file, from the origin of the hair towards its extremity.

*Why do onions rubbed on the scalp stimulate the growth of hair?*

Because of the ammonia contained in the onion. Hartshorn diluted is used by some persons for dressing the hair.

*Why are camphor, pepper, musk, &c, useless to rid a wardrobe of clothes-moths?*

Because neither of these articles will affect the eggs of clothes-moths, and even the insects sometimes wrap themselves up too closely to be affected by any thing but *heat*. This, when it can be conveniently applied, will be certain either to dislodge or to kill them. The keeper of the Museum at Strasburg, to convince himself of the uselessness of camphor, hatched moths in the strong smell of camphor.

*Why are cedar and rose-wood unattacked by insects?*

Because of the aromatic oils they contain ; all volatile or odorous substances being particularly destructive to the minute insects and animalculæ found in wood.

## CULINARY IMPLEMENTS, &amp;c.

*Why is 'Prince's metal' so called?*

Because it was invented by Prince Rupert, an ingenious philosopher of the time of Charles II. It is made by alloying copper or brass with zinc, and it approaches nearest to the colour of gold. The finest sort is called pinchbeck, and is sometimes used in making watch-cases, &c. The toys known as 'Rupert's Drops' are also of his invention.

*Why are some tea-trays, snuff-boxes, &c, called 'papier-maché'?*

Because they are made of cuttings of white or brown paper, boiled in water, and beaten in a mortar till they are reduced to a kind of paste, and then boiled with a solution of gum arabic, or of size, to give consistency to the paste, which is afterwards formed into different shapes, by pressing it into oiled moulds. When dry, it is coated with a mixture of size and lamp-black, and afterwards varnished. In Paris, a very economical mode of procuring the materials for *papier-maché* is now adopted:—the walls being diligently stripped of the posting-bills, which thus afford both paper and paste for the moulding of snuff-boxes, &c.

*Why does a silver spoon change colour when immersed in an egg?*

Because the egg contains sulphur, or sulphureted hydrogen, that is to say, one part of hydrogen combined with sixteen parts of sulphur.

*Why do house-bells often fail to ring when pulled in summer?*

Because the wires then become expanded or slack, whereas they are of proper length in winter.

*Why is black-lead used for the fronts of grates, &c?*

Because it preserves them from rust, besides improving their appearance; and its polish is not affected by heat.

*Why may copper saucepans be safely used in cooking, if kept clean?*

Because fat and oily substances, and vegetable acids, do not attack copper while hot. If soup, gravy, &c, grow cold in copper vessels, danger will ensue. If put away damp, they become crusted with poisonous matter, and if not often used their surface becomes rusted by exposure to the atmosphere. At Paris, in August, 1829, a gentleman was poisoned by partaking of soup which had been warmed in a saucepan thus infected.

*Why is pewter of superior sweetness for domestic purposes?*

Because of the great proportion of tin which it contains. Thus, the mixture for pewter is 112lbs tin, 15lbs lead, and 6lbs brass; and some manufacturers make it of bismuth and antimony. Bismuth is generally mixed with tin, to give that metal more brilliancy and hardness.

*Why is common yellow earthenware called 'delft'?*

Because it was originally manufactured at the town of Delft, in Holland.

#### LAMPS AND CANDLES.

*Why does the flame of a candle burn in a conical shape?*

Because the flame is a tube or cone of fire, the hollow part of which is filled with the vapour which is not inflamed, and the vapour being gradually consumed as it rises, the quantity is lessened in its dimensions. The vapour is rendered of less specific gravity than the air, and so is the flame, or ignited vapour; consequently it rises upwards.

*Why do Argand's or 'patent' lamps give an improved light?*

Because any contrivance by which air may be more freely admitted to a body in a state of combustion, makes it go on more actively, and thus lamps receive the air into a hollow within the flame,

by which means oxygen enters into it externally and internally. Lord Cochrane's lamps, by exposing a larger surface to admit oxygen, were an improvement upon the common lamps in the streets.

*Why is the supply of oil in an Argand lamp placed above the flame, and with its mouth downwards?*

Because the mouth being immersed in oil, of which the surface is nearly on a level with the flame, no oil can escape from above but as the flame consumes the free oil, which is its supply, and which is thus maintained at a constant elevation. — *Arnott.*

*Why do some lamps burn without a wick?*

Because the oil is raised through a small tin tube, which becoming hot, the oil is decomposed, and gas generated. When this is consumed, a new portion comes up to supply its place, and this continues as long as any oil remains in the cup.

*Why does the wick of a lamp smoke but little when surrounded by a glass?*

Because the principles of the oil, that supply the flame, are concentrated within the tube of glass, and are thus more effectually consumed than in the open air. Hence, also, the light is improved.

*Why does a lamp smoke when the wick is cut unevenly?*

Because the gas or vapour of the oil escapes more at the longer part of the wick, and not reaching the centre of the flame, cannot be entirely consumed.

*Why do we sometimes see the street oil-lamps, after a foggy night, burning to a late hour next morning?*

Because one effect of a fog is to diminish the combustion of oil in lamps and other lights; which shows that misty and damp air does not furnish oxygen so readily as that which is clear.

*Why are white wax tapers safer than green for ordinary use?*

Because green tapers are coloured with verdigris, and when burnt, the copper of the verdigris is reduced

for a time in the wick. If such a taper be lighted, and the flame then blown out, leaving the wick glowing, combustion of the wax will still proceed, slowly indeed, but for hours and days together, until the whole of the wax is burnt, or until the combustion has reached some part where it is extinguished by the contact of neighbouring bodies. This does not happen with white tapers, and hence they are safer.

#### LIGHT AND SHADOW.

*Why does a person viewing himself in a looking-glass, appear on the glass but one half his real magnitude, let his distance from the glass be in any manner varied?*

Because his image appears behind the glass, exactly at the same distance as the object is before it, the mirror being half way between him and his apparent image, and cutting in half the cone of rays proceeding from his image to the eye. — *Arnott.*

*Why have cats and other domestic animals their passions strongly excited, when viewing themselves in a looking-glass for the first time?*

Because common experience leads them to expect the object to be in the direction in which the rays come to their eyes, instead of in the real place of the object.

*Why does a gold fish in a glass globe often appear as two fishes?*

Because the fish is seen as well by light bent through the upper surface of the water, as by straight rays passing through the side of the glass.

*Why is the shadow of a hand held between a candle and the wall, gigantic?*

Because the light-giving surface is then smaller than the opaque body, and the shadow is consequently larger than the body.

*Why are bay, or large windows, preferable to a row of smaller windows in rooms?*

Because the bays admit the light in masses, which thus sets off all forms to advantage.

1855



## INK.

*Why are galls and sulphate of iron (copperas) used in making ink?*

Because the tannin and acid of the galls precipitate a fine black fecula from the sulphate of iron.

*Why are logwood and gum used in making ink?*

Because its colouring matter is disposed to unite with the oxide of iron, and renders it not only of a very dark colour, but less capable of change from the action of acids, or of the air. Gum-arabic, or any other pure gum, is of service, by retarding the precipitation of the fecula, by preventing the ink from spreading or sinking into the paper, and by affording it a kind of compact varnish or defence from the air, when dry. — *Ribancourt.*

*Why is vinegar objectionable in ink?*

Because the acid acts so strongly upon the pen that it very frequently requires mending.

*Why should ink be kept in closed vessels?*

Because, if uncovered, it absorbs oxygen, and the colour is injured; and its watery part evaporates and leaves it unfit for use.

One of the best substances for diluting ink, if it be, in the first instance, too thick for use, or afterwards become so by evaporation, is a strong decoction of coffee, which appears in no respect to promote the decomposition of the ink, while it improves its colour, and gives it an additional lustre. — *Dr Bostock, in the Transactions of the Society of Arts.*

*Why do black earthenware ink-stands destroy the colour of ink?*

Because of the action of the argillaceous (clayey) matter of the ink-stand upon the gallic acid of the ink.

*Why does ink, though pale when first written with, afterwards become black?*

Because the galls will not immediately give a black colour to the copperas, but require exposure to atmospheric air, so that the iron may acquire more oxygen.

*Why do fountain ink-glasses preserve the ink well?*

Because there is so small a surface exposed to the air; and the glass may be of a large size, so as not to require frequent replenishing. This inkstand is precisely on the principle of the common fountain water-glass for bird-cages.

#### CLOCKS AND WATCHES.

*Why does a pocket watch differ from a clock?*

Because it has a vibrating wheel instead of a vibrating pendulum; and as, in a clock, gravity is always pulling the pendulum down to the bottom of its arc, which is its natural place of rest, but does not fix it there, because the momentum acquired during its fall from one side, carries it up to an equal height on the other—so, in a watch, a spring, generally spiral, surrounding the axis of the balance-wheel, is always pulling this towards a middle position of rest, but does not fix it there, because the momentum acquired during its approach to the middle position, from either side, carries it just as far past on the other side, and the spring has to begin its work again. The balance wheel at each vibration allows one tooth of the adjoining wheel to pass, as the pendulum does in a clock, and the record of the beats is preserved by the wheel which follows, as already explained for the clock. A main-spring is used to keep up the motion of the watch, instead of the weight used in a clock; and, as a spring acts equally well, whatever be its position, a watch keeps time although carried in the pocket, or in a moving ship. — *Arnott.*

*Why do clocks vary in going in summer and winter?*

Because the metallic pendulum varies in length with every change of temperature. Every four degrees of the thermometer will cause a variation of a second per day; and the difference between the going of a clock in summer and winter will be about six seconds per day, or one minute in ten days. — *Roy.*

*Why do we wind up watches?*

Because one turn of the axle on which the watch key is fixed, is rendered equivalent, by the train of wheels, to about four hundred turns or beats of the balance-wheel; and thus the exertion, during a few seconds, of the hand which winds up, gives motion for twenty-four or thirty hours. — *Arnott.*

Before a watch is ready for the pocket, the component parts must have passed through the hands of not less than one hundred and fifty different workmen.

*Why do some time-pieces go for a year?*

Because the number of wheels is proportionally increased; if the material would last, they might easily be made to go for a hundred or a thousand years. — *Arnott.*

## LOCKS.

*Why are locks known to be of high antiquity?*

Because sculptures of locks similar to those now used in Egypt, have been discovered on the great temple of Karnac, whence Denon infers locks were known in Egypt about four thousand years since. A lock resembling the Egyptian is used in Cornwall, and the same has been seen in the Faro islands; to both which places it was probably taken by the Phœnicians.

*Why are Bramah's locks more secure than others?*

Because of their combinations, or multiplication of numbers into each other, which is known to increase in the most rapid proportion. Thus, a lock of five slides admits of 3,000 variations, while one of eight will have no less than 1,935,360 changes; or, in other words, that number of attempts at making a key, or at picking it, may be made, before it can be opened. This difficulty, great as it is, has been increased a hundred fold by an improvement of the inventor's son.

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**KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PEOPLE :**

**OR THE**

**PLAIN WHY AND BECAUSE.**

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**PART III. — ORIGINS AND ANTIQUITIES.**



## ORIGINS AND ANTIQUITIES.

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### THE CALENDAR.

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*Why is a table of the year called a calendar?*

Because the Romans called the first days of each month *Calends*, from a word which signified *called*; on account of the pontiffs on those days calling the people together, to apprize them of the festivals in the month then beginning.

*Why is a calendar of the year called an almanack?*

Because of its derivation from the Arabic, *Al man-ach*, to count. Verstegan makes the word of German origin, *Almonat*; and says that our Saxon ancestors were in the practice of carving the annual courses of the moon upon a small piece of wood, which they called *Almonaught*, (al-moon-heed).

*Why are the days of the week called by their present names?*

Because our Saxon ancestors dedicated them respectively to their gods: thus, *Sunday* from *Sunnan-Dæg*, or sun's-day, because it was dedicated to the worship of the sun; *Monday* from *Monan-Dæg*, to the moon; *Tuesday* from *Tuisco*, the most ancient god of the Germans; *Wednesday*, a contraction of *Wodin's* or *Odin's* day; *Thursday* from *Thor's Dæg*, or the Thunderer's day, to the worship of *Thor*, the bravest of the sons of *Odin*; *Friday*, from *Friga*, the wife of *Odin*; and *Saturday*, from *Seater-Dæg*, from the idol *Seater*.

*Why are two weeks called a fortnight?*

Because of its contraction from the Saxon for fourteen nights; from the custom of the ancient northern nations to count by nights; thus we say, this day seven, or se'night, for a week.

*Why was the eve or day before a solemn feast called a vigil?*

Because the primitive Christians were wont to watch, (*vigilare*, Latin) fast and pray in their churches.

*Why had the monks a Floral calendar?*

Because they had for each day in the year, a flower dedicated to a particular saint, on account of its flowering about the saint's festival.

*Why are fairs so often held on church holidays?*

Because they originated in an attempt of Gregory the Great to render popular the festival of the patron saints of churches; for which purpose he encouraged the people, on the day of the festival, to erect booths of branches about the church, and to feast and be merry in them with innocence. This custom was introduced into England from the continent, and must have been equally familiar to the Britons and Saxons, being observed among the churches of Asia and Europe in the sixth century, and by those of Western Europe in the seventh. And equally in Asia and Europe, equally on the continent and the islands, these celebrities gave rise to those commercial marts, which we call *fairs*. The people resorted in crowds to the festival, and a considerable provision would be wanted for their entertainment. The prospect of interest invited the little traders of the country to come with their wares; thus, among the many pavilions for hospitality in the neighbourhood of the church, various booths were erected for the sale of commodities. In large towns, surrounded with populous districts, the resort of the people to the wake would be great, and the attendance of traders at the celebrity was nume-

rous; and this resort, and this attendance, constituted a fair.

Basil expressly mentions the numerous appearance of traders at these festivals in Asia, and Gregory notes the same custom to be common in Europe. And, as the festival was observed on a *Feria*, or holiday; it as naturally assumed to itself, and as naturally communicated to the mart, the appellation of *Feria*, or *fair*. The same among the Saxons, the French, the Germans, the Britons, *Fager*, *Foir*, *Feyer*, *Faire*; the word was derived from the same source in all these nations — the one ecclesiastical language of West Europe at this period. Several of our most ancient fairs appear to have been actually held, and have been actually continued to our own time, on the original church holidays of the places; as that on the festival of St Peter's Church, in Westminster; another on the feast of St Cuthbert, in Durham; and a third on the holiday of St Bartholomew, in London. — *Dr Whitaker*.

*Why are public holidays less prejudicial to trade than is generally imagined?*

Because, if by an agreement amongst themselves, or by a statute, the shops of tradesmen were shut on one other day besides Sunday in every month, fortnight or week, as much of their wares would be sold as ever; the business that would have been transacted on the new holiday, would be done on one of the remaining days; some ease would be gained, and no custom lost by the whole company. It is no inconvenience to the public that nutmegs and pepper cannot be procured on a Sunday — nor would it be if the same disability was extended to a Wednesday. It would, however, be very inconvenient if there were only one day in the year on which spices could be transferred. — This is the *rationale* of holidays.

In mechanical occupations it is somewhat different. Whilst the saw and the shuttle are still, the gains of



the joiner and weaver stop also ; but if there be an adequate motive for vigorous exertions, every one must have observed, that in mechanical arts, although it may not be possible to put the labour of a month into a week, it is very easy to do the work of ten days in nine. A holiday that has been spent in an agreeable and rational manner, has an invigorating effect ; and the anticipated holiday is still more animating ; besides, unceasing toil is injurious, and an excess of labour, like all other excesses, is mischievous, and destroys the power of labouring. — *Edinburgh Review.*

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*Why is the first day of the year dedicated to Janus ?*

Because Janus, being two-faced, is the emblem of retrospect and foresight united.

*Why do we make gifts on New Year's day ?*

Because such was the custom in the time of Romulus and Tatius, when the usual presents were figs and dates covered with leaf gold, and sent by clients to patrons, with a piece of money, which was expended to purchase the statues of deities.

*Why is Twelfth Day also called Epiphany ?*

Because Epiphany signifies manifestation, and this is the day whereon Christ was manifested to the Gentiles.

*Why are ' King and Queen' drawn on Twelfth Day ?*

Because of its origin from a custom among the ancient Greeks and Romans, who, on the festival days of Saturn, about this season of the year, drew lots for kingdoms, and like kings, exercised their temporary authority. — *Brand.* — Mr Fosbroke affirms, that ' the King of Saturnalia was elected by beans, and that from thence came our king and queen on this day.'

*Why is the first Monday after Twelfth Day called Plough Monday ?*

Because it was the first day after Christmas that husbandmen resumed the plough.

*Why is a certain inflammatory disease called St Anthony's fire?*

Because when it raged violently, in various parts, in the eleventh century, according to the legend, the intercession of St Anthony was prayed for, and it miraculously ceased.

*Why was St Vincent's also called Sunbeam Day?*

Because of an old proverb that it bodes good luck if the sunbeams break out during this day. A Latin proverbial line has it, '*Vincenti festo si sol radiat, memor esto*;' thus in English, and extended:—

Remember, on St Vincent's Day  
If that the sun his beams display,  
Be sure to mark the transient beam  
Which through the casement sheds a gleam;  
For 'tis a token bright and clear,  
Of prosperous weather all the year.

St Vincent, a Spanish martyr, was burnt in 304; and Dr Foster thinks the custom may have been derived from a notion that the sun would not shine continuously on the day whereon the Saint was burnt.

*Why was St Paul's also called Prognostic Day?*

Because of the ancient superstitious observance of the weather of this day, considered as ominous of the future year, of which the following quotation gives the best account: an old proverb says—

'Clari dies Pauli bona tempora denotat anni.  
Si fuerint venti designant poecilia genti.  
Si fuerint nebulae pereunt animalia quaeque;  
Si nix, si pluvia, designant tempora cara;  
Ne credas certè, nam fallit regula saepe.'

Which has been thus paraphrased:

'If St Paul's Day be fair and cleare,  
It doth betide a happy yeare;  
But if by chance it then should raine,  
It will make deare all kinds of graine;  
And if the clouds make dark the skie,  
Then neate and fowles this year shall die;  
If blustering winds do blow aloft,  
Then wars shall trouble the realm full oft.'

*Why is Purification Day also called Candlemas?*

Because, before mass is said this day, the church blesses her candles for the whole year, and makes a procession, with hallowed or blessed candles in the hands of the faithful. — *Old Catholic Tract.*

*Why is the festival of St Valentine, or St Valentine's Day, preserved in our Calendar?*

Because it was the practice in ancient Rome, during a great part of the month of February, to celebrate the Lupercalia, which were feasts in honour of Pan and Juno, whence the latter deity was named Februa, Februalis, and Februlla. On this occasion, amidst a variety of ceremonies, the names of young women were put into a box, from which they were drawn by the men, as chance directed. The pastors of the early Christian church, who by every possible means endeavoured to eradicate the vestiges of pagan superstitions, and chiefly by some commutations of their forms, substituted, in the present instance, the names of particular saints, instead of those of the women; and as the festival of the Lupercalia had commenced about the middle of February, they appear to have chosen Valentine's Day for celebrating the new feast, because it occurred nearly at the same time.

Brand says, 'I have found unquestionable authority to evince, that the custom of choosing Valentines was a sport practised in the houses of the gentry in England, as early as the year 1476.'

*Why were leeks worn by the Welsh, or ancient Britons, on St David's Day.*

Because of a signal victory obtained by the Britons under the command of a famous general, known vulgarly by the name of St David; when the Britons wore a leek in their hats, to distinguish their friends from their enemies in the heat of the battle. Other explanations are given; but Mr Brand thinks this is the best solution.

Mr Hone observes, it is probable that leeks were a Druidic symbol, employed in honour of the British *Cendven*, or Ceres, presuming that the Druids were a branch of the Phœnician priesthood. Both were addicted to oak worship; and during the funereal rites of Adonis and Byblos, leeks and onions were exhibited in pots, with other vegetables, and called the gardens of that deity. The leek was worshipped at Ascalon, (whence the modern term of Scallions,) as it was in Egypt; leeks and onions were also deposited in the sacred chests of the mysteries, both of Isis and Ceres, the *Cendven* of the Druids: leeks are among the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and sometimes a leek is on the head of Osiris; and at other times grasped in an extended hand. *Porrus*, a leek, is derived by Bryant from the Egyptian god *Pi-orus*, who is the same as the *Beal Peor* of the Phœnicians, and the *Bel* or *Bellinis* of the Druids.

*Why is the day before Shrove Tuesday called Collop Monday?*

Because it was the last day of flesh-eating before Lent, when our ancestors cut their flesh meat into collops or steaks, for salting or hanging up till Lent was over: hence, in many places, it is still a custom to have eggs and collops, or slices of bacon, at dinner on this day.

*Why are pancakes eaten on Shrove Tuesday?*

Because they are taken from the heathen *Fornacalia*, celebrated on the 18th of February, in memory of making bread before ovens were invented by the goddess *Fornax*. — *Fosbrooke*.

*Why is the day before Lent called Shrove Tuesday?*

Because of its corruption from *Shrive*, an old Saxon word signifying confession. Hence, Shrove Tuesday means Confession Tuesday, on which day all the people in every parish throughout the kingdom, during the Romish times, were obliged to con-

fess their sins, one by one, to their own parish priests, in their own parish churches.

*Why was throwing at cocks formerly customary on Shrove Tuesday?*

Because the crowing of a cock once prevented our Saxon ancestors from massacring their conquerors, another part of our ancestors, the Danes, on the morning of a Shrove Tuesday, while asleep in their beds.

This is the account generally received, although two lines in an epigram 'On a Cock at Rochester,' by the witty Sir Charles Sedley, imply that the cock suffered this annual barbarity by way of punishment for St Peter's crime, in denying his Lord and Master:—

'Mayst thou be punish'd for St Peter's crime,  
And on Shrove Tuesday perish in thy prime.'

A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* also says:—  
'The barbarous practice of throwing at a cock tied to a stake on Shrovetide, I think I have read, has an allusion to the indignities offered by the Jews to the Saviour of the World before his Crucifixion.'—*Ellis's Notes to Brand.*

*Why was cock-fighting a popular sport in Greece?*

Because of its origin from the Athenians, on the following occasion.—When Themistocles was marching his army against the Persians, he, by the way, espying two cocks fighting, caused his army to halt, and addressed them as follows:—'Behold! these do not fight for their household gods, for the monuments of their ancestors, nor for glory, nor for liberty, nor for the safety of their children, but only because the one will not give way to the other.' This so encouraged the Grecians, that they fought strenuously, and obtained the victory over the Persians; upon which, cock-fighting was, by a particular law, ordered to be annually celebrated by the Athenians.

Cæsar mentions the English cocks in his *Commentaries*; but the earliest notice of cock-fighting in England, is by Fitzstephen the monk, who died 1191.

*Why is Lent so called?*

Because of the season wherein it is observed; Lent in the Saxon language signifying Spring, being now used to signify the Spring Fast, which always begins so that it may end at Easter, to remind us of our Saviour's sufferings, which ended at his resurrection.—*Wheatley on the Common Prayer.*

*Why is the first day of Lent called Ash Wednesday?*

Because, in the Roman Catholic Church, the priest blesses ashes on this day, and puts them on the heads of the people.

*Why was leprosy so prevalent in England before the Reformation?*

Because of the necessity of eating salt fish and salted meat during a great portion of the year, from the ordinances of the old religion, as well as from the defective state of agriculture.

*Why is the shamrock or trefoil the national emblem of Ireland?*

Because it is said that when St Patrick landed near Wicklow, to convert the Irish in 433, the pagan inhabitants were ready to stone him; he requested to be heard, and endeavoured to explain God to them as the Trinity in Unity, but they could not understand him; till, plucking a trefoil from the ground, he said 'Is it not as possible for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as for these leaves, to grow upon a single stalk.' Then the Irish were immediately convinced.—*Brand.*

An ingenious naturalist has lately attempted to prove that the original plant was not the white clover which is now employed as the emblem of Ireland. He conceives it should be something familiar to the people, and familiar too when the national feast is celebrated. Now, the white clover is not fully expanded on St Patrick's Day, and wild specimens could hardly be obtained at this season. Besides, it was certainly uncommon in Ireland during its early history, having been introduced into that country in

the middle of the seventeenth century, and made common by cultivation. Old authors prove that the shamrock was eaten by the Irish; and one who went over to Ireland in the sixteenth century, says it was eaten, and was a *sour* plant. The name, also, of shamrock is common to several trefoils, both in the Irish and Gaelic languages. Now, clover could not have been eaten, and is not sour. *Wood-sorrel* alone is sour, is an early spring plant, is abundant in Ireland, and is a trefoil. The old herbalists call it *shero-rog*, and it is sour; while its beauty might entitle it to the distinction of being the national emblem. The substitution of one for the other has been occasioned by cultivation, which made the wood-sorrel less abundant, and the Dutch clover plentiful.—*Abridged from the Philosophical Magazine.*

*Why is Lady-Day so called?*

Because it is the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary; whose ancient and popular name was 'Our Lady.'

*Why are fried peas, eaten in the North on the Sunday, before Palm Sunday, called Carlings?*

Because the day was formerly called *Carle*, or *Carle Sunday*, as may yet be seen in some old almanacs.

*Why were beans applied to religious uses among the Romans?*

Because they were thought to belong to the dead. Pliny observes that 'beans contain the souls of the dead;' and Plutarch held them to be of the highest efficacy for invoking the manes. The repast for the dead commonly consisted of beans, lettuces, &c.; and in the Lemuria, held to pacify the ghosts of the dead, the Romans threw beans on the fire of the altar, to drive them out of their houses.

*Why is Palm Sunday so named?*

Because, on that day, as the Ritualists say, the boughs of palm trees used to be carried in procession, in imitation of those which the Jews strewed in the

way of Christ when he went up to Jerusalem. Boxwood is still used for palm in Roman Catholic countries; — (*Brand*) — and willow, laurel, yew, and box for decoration, in England.

*Why are the blossoms of the willow called palm?*

Because, the blossoms coming forth before any leaves appear, and flourishing most before Easter, are gathered to deck houses on *Palm Sunday*.

The ceremony of bearing palms in England was retained till the second year of the reign of Edward VI. Mr Douce says, 'I have somewhere met with a proverbial saying, that he who hath not a palm in his hand on Palm Sunday must have his hand cut off.'

Palm Sunday was also specially observed as a Church festival: in the church-wardens' account of Kingston-upon-Thames, occurs: — 1. Henry VIII. 'For ale upon Palm Sunday, on syngeing of the Passion, 0l. 0s. 1d.'

*Why is it customary to make fools on the first of April?*

Because, says Mr Douce, 'after all the conjectures which have been formed touching its origin, it is certainly borrowed from the French, and may, I think, be deduced from this simple analogy. The French call them april fish, (*poissons d'Avril*) i. e. simpletons, or, in other words, silly mackerel, which suffer themselves to be caught in this month. But, as with us April is not the season of that fish, we have very properly substituted the word Fools.'

*Why is a stupid person in the North called a gowk, or a gawkie?*

Because Gauch, in the Teutonic, is rendered *stultus*, fool. — *Brand*.

*Why are persons thus imposed upon, in the North of England called 'April gowks'?*

Because a gowk, or gowk, is properly a cuckoo, and is used here metaphorically, for a fool. The cuckoo



is, indeed, everywhere a name of contempt. In Scotland, upon April-Day, 'they hunt the gowk,' by sending silly people upon fools' errands, from place to place, with a letter, in which is written : —

'On the first day of April,  
Hunt the gowk another mile.' — *Brand.*

*Why is an absurd errand called 'sleeveless'?*

Because, to 'sleave atwo' is an old expression for untwisting or unfolding, and 'less' final being negative, sleeve-less plainly implies that which cannot be untwisted or explained. — *Ellis's Notes to Brand.*

*Why is the day before Good Friday called Maunday Thursday?*

Because of a custom of the king's distributing alms to a certain number of poor persons at Whitehall, on that day, from *maunds*, or baskets, originally from the Saxon *mand*. — *Nares.*

Part of the ceremony consisted in washing the feet of the poor in the Royal Chapel, which was formerly done by the kings themselves, in imitation of our Saviour's pattern of humility, &c. James II, was the last king who performed this in person; (*Gentleman's Magazine*) it being now the office of the Lord High Almoner.

*Why are buns on Good Friday marked with a cross?*

Because the cross is a received symbol of the Roman Catholic religion, and commemorates the passion of Christ on this day.

The cross is the most popular emblem of popery that the Reformation has spared in England. The various uses of the cross, devotional as well as secular, deserve notice. 'In the North of England, the country people make with a knife, many little cross marks on their cakes, before they put them into the oven. Persons who cannot write, instead of signing their names, make their marks in the form of a cross. From the cross at the beginning of a horn book, the alphabet

is called the Christ Cross Row. The cross used in shop-books, Butler seems to derive from the same origin. The round O of a milk-score is, if I mistake not, marked with a cross for a shilling. Flecknoe says, (1665) that fanatical reformers attached ill luck to a bird flying with its wings across, a ship with its cross-yard sail upon the sea, and profaneness to a tailor sitting cross-legged; which detestation of the cross-form took its rise from the odium at that time against every thing derived from popery. Among the Irish, when a woman milks her cow, she dips her finger into the milk, with which she crosses the beast, and piously articulates a prayer, saying, 'Mary and our Lord preserve thee till I come again.'—(*Genl. Magaz.* 1795.)

In the West of England, is a vulgar notion, that the straight stripe down the shoulders of the ass, intersected by a long one from the neck to the tail, is a *cross* of honour conferred upon him by Christ, and that before Christ rode upon the ass, that animal was not so distinguished.

*Why are these buns so called?*

Because of the origin of the term from a species of sacred bread, which used to be offered to the gods, and was called *Boun*. The Greeks, who changed the *nu* final into a *sigma*, expressed it in the nominative *Bout*, but in the accusative, more truly *Boun*, *Bovv*. Heyschius speaks of the *boun*, and describes it a kind of cake, with a representation of two horns. Julius Pollux mentions it after the same manner, a sort of cake with horns. Diogenes Laertius, speaking of the same offering, made by Empedocles, describes the chief ingredients of which it is composed. 'He offered one of the sacred Liba, called a *Bouse*, which was made of fine flour and honey.' It is said of Cecrops, that he first offered up this sort of sweetbread. Hence we may judge of the antiquity of the custom, from the times to which Cecrops is referred (1080, B.C.) The prophet Jeremiah takes notice of

this kind of offering, when he is speaking of the Jewish women at Pathros in Egypt, and of their base idolatry; in all which their husbands had encouraged them. The women, in their expectation upon his rebuke, tell him, 'Did we not make thee cakes to worship her?' Jer. xlv. 18, 19. vii. 18. 'Small loaves of bread,' Mr Hutchinson observes, 'peculiar in their form, being long and sharp at both ends, are called buns.' These Mr Bryant derives as above, and concludes: — 'We only retain the name and form of the *Boun*, the sacred uses are no more.' — *Brand.*

*Why did the Kings of England formerly halloo rings on Good Friday?*

Because the wearers should not be afflicted with the falling sickness; a ring which had long been preserved with great veneration, in Westminster Abbey, being supposed to have great efficacy against the cramp and falling sickness, when touched by those who were afflicted with either of those disorders. This ring is reported to have been brought from Jerusalem.

'Crampe rings' are also mentioned by Lord Barners; and in our times jet rings are by weak persons believed to be singularly efficacious.

*Why is Friday superstitiously considered an unlucky day?*

Because, probably, of the crucifixion of our Saviour on a Friday — a day of fear, trembling, of darkness, and earthquakes. The fast ordained by the Church contributes to perpetuate these mournful ideas.

The Romans had their *lucky* and *unlucky* days, and on the latter would not undertake any business, for fear it should have a bad conclusion: they considered them as unhappy and of bad omen. The French have also an unlucky or unfortunate day, and this is *Friday*. On this day, they will not undertake any business of importance, for fear of its turning out badly; or a long

journey, lest it may abound with distressing accidents; a marriage is seldom contracted on this day, lest it should be unhappy. — Leigh Hunt tells us that ‘Lord Byron believed in the *ill-luck* of Fridays, and was seriously disconcerted if any thing was to be done on that frightful day of the week.’

*Why is Easter so called?*

Because it is derived from the goddess Eastor, worshipped by our Saxon ancestors, with peculiar ceremonies, in April. The anniversary festival in honour of *Christ's resurrection* falling at the same time of the year, occasioned the transfer of the heathen name in this country to the Christian celebration.

*Why are churches decorated with flowers and shrubs on Easter Day?*

Because the plants are most probably intended as emblems of the resurrection, having just risen from the earth, in which, during the severity of winter, they seem to have been buried. — *Gent. Mag.* 1783.

*Why are ‘Paste Eggs’ given as farings in the northern counties at Easter?*

Because the custom is the remains of an ancient superstition of the Roman Church, adopted from the Jews. Thus, in one of their prayers: ‘Bless, O Lord, we beseech thee, this thy creature of eggs,’ &c.

Eggs were held by the Egyptians as a sacred emblem of the renovation of mankind after the deluge. The Jews adopted it to suit the circumstances of their history, as a type of their departure from the land of Egypt; and it was used in the feast of the passover, as part of the furniture of the table, with the Paschal lamb. The Christians have certainly used it on this day, as retaining the elements of future life, for an emblem of the resurrection. — *Hutchinson's Northumberland.*

*Why are these eggs called ‘Paste’?*

Because they celebrate *Pasche*, or Easter.

*Why are tansy puddings and cakes eaten at Easter?*

Because they were introduced by the monks, as symbolical of the bitter herbs in use among the Jews at this season; though, at the same time, bacon was always a part of the Easter fare, to denote a contempt of Judaism.

*Why are mint and sugar a general sauce for lamb?*

Because of its origin from the above custom of eating bitter herbs: the Jews contriving to diminish the bitter flavour of the tansy, by making it into a sauce for their paschal lamb.\*

*Why was the custom of 'heaving or lifting' formerly very general at Easter?*

Because it was intended to represent our Saviour's resurrection. — *Brand.* — The men lift the women on Easter Monday, and the women the men on Tuesday. One or more take hold of each leg, and one or more of each arm, near the body, and lift the person up in a horizontal position, three times. — *Gent. Mag.* 1784.

*Why is it erroneous to suppose that the figures on the Biddenden cakes represent the donors of the gift?†*

Because the givers were two maidens, named Preston; and the print of the women on the cakes has taken place only within these 50 years, and was intended to represent two poor widows, as the general objects of a charitable benefaction. — *Hasted's Hist. of Kent.*

\* From the Greek *pascha*, also from the Hebrew *peseech*, passover, we have *paschal*; applied to the lamb which formed part of the evening meal, the last of which our Saviour partook, before his death, with his twelve disciples.

† The gift was 20 acres of land at Biddenden, given by persons unknown, the yearly rents of which are to be distributed among the poor of this parish. This is yearly done on Easter Sunday, in the afternoon, in 800 cakes, (each of which has impressed on it the figures of two women), which are given to all such as attend the church; and 270 loaves, weighing 3 1-2 lbs. each, to which latter is added 1 1-2 lb. cheese, are given to the parishioners only, at the same time. The vulgar tradition is that the above figures were twins, joined together in their bodies, and who had lived thus together, till they were between 20 and 30 years of age.

*Why is the Sunday after Easter Day called Low Sunday?*

Because the ceremonies performed in the ancient church were not of so grand and pompous a nature as the *high* festival of Easter. *Dominica in Albis* is also another title of this Sunday, which took its origin from the chrisoms, or white robes, considered as emblems of purity and innocence, being then laid aside, which had been placed upon those christened on Easter-eve.

*Why is St George the patron saint of England?*

Because, when Robert, Duke of Normandy, the son of William the Conqueror, was fighting against the Turks, and laying siege to the famous city of Antioch, which was expected to be relieved by the Saracens, St George appeared with an innumerable army, coming down from the hills, all clad in white, with a red cross on his banner, to reinforce the Christians; this so terrified the infidels, that they fled, and left the Christians in possession of the town. — *Butler*.

*Why is St George usually painted on horseback, and tilting at a dragon under his feet?*

Because the representation is emblematical of his faith and fortitude, by which he conquered the devil, called the dragon in the Apocalypse. — *Butler*.

*Why was the Order of the Garter instituted?*

Because of the victory obtained over the French at the battle of Cressy; when Edward ordered his garter to be displayed as a signal of battle; to commemorate which, he made a garter the principal ornament of an order, and a symbol of the indissoluble union of the knights. The order is under the patronage or protection of St George, whence he figures in its insignia. Such is the account of Camden, Fern, and others. — The common story of the order being instituted in honour of a garter of the Countess of Salisbury, which she dropped in dancing, and which was picked up by King Edward, has been denounced as fabulous by our best antiquaries.

*Why is St George the patron of the army?*

Because he was himself a soldier in the army of Dioclesian. — *Butler.*

*Why is St Mark usually depicted with a lion couchant, winged, by his side?*

Because the lion is emblematical of the nervous solidity of his writings; and the wings, of the more than human powers displayed in their composition.

*Why is the Jewish festival of the Passover, or the Pascal Lamb, celebrated on the 25th of April?*

Because of the directions given in Exodus, xii, 3 to 20, beginning, 'Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, in the tenth day of this month, (Nisan) they shall take to them every man a lamb, without blemish, a male of the first year.' On this occasion, every house was not only ordered to provide a lamb to be killed on the fourteenth day in the evening, but its blood was to be sprinkled on the door-posts; and the lamb eaten by the people in their travelling attire; because it was known, that in consequence of the dreadful plagues, the Egyptians would send them forth in haste. They were also ordered to take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts of the door, in order that, when the destroying angel passed through to smite all the first-born of the land of Egypt, seeing this blood, he would pass over the children of Israel, so that the plague should not be upon them to destroy them. The feast of the paschal lamb, or passover, was therefore ordered to be kept throughout all generations, by an ordinance, forever. — *Times' Telescope*, 1815.

*Why did the ancient Jews at Jerusalem reserve criminals for execution till the celebration of the most solemn feasts?*

Because then, (at the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles) the Jews came up to Jerusalem to sacrifice, and the malefactors were then executed, in order that all Israel might see and fear.

*Why are parochial perambulations made, and bounds beaten on Ascension Day ? \**

Because they are in imitation of the heathen feast called Terminalia, dedicated to the god Terminus, (Latin for bound) who was considered as the guardian of fields and landmarks, and the keeper up of friendship and peace among men. (*Spelman*, cited by Bourne.) The primitive custom used by Christians on this occasion, was, for the people to accompany the bishop or some of the clergy into the fields, where Litanies were made, and the mercy of God implored, that he would avert the evils of plague and pestilence, that he would send them good weather, and give them in due season the fruits of the earth. — *Brand*.

Shaw, in his history of Staffordshire, says, this ceremony has probably its origin in the Roman offerings of the *primitiæ* (or first fruits). 'The idea was, no doubt, that of returning thanks to God, by whose goodness the face of nature was renovated, and fresh means provided for the sustenance and comfort of His creatures.' The ceremony was sometimes performed at crosses, for in a curious sermon, date 1590, we find that the Catholics had their 'gospels at superstitious crosses deck't like idols;' and Dr Plott says, at Stanlake, Oxon, the minister of the parish, on this occasion, 'reads the gospel at a barrel's head, in the cellar of the Chequer Inn, in that town, where some say there was formerly a hermitage; others, that there was anciently a cross, at which they read the gospel in former times; over which, the house, and particularly the cellar, being built, they are forced to continue the custom as above. At Oxford, at this time, the little crosses, cut in the stones of buildings, to denote the division of the parishes, are whitened with chalk. — *Ellis's Notes to Brand*.

*Why is Rogation Sunday so called ?*

Because of the derivation of the term from th



Latin *rogare* to ask; and on the three subsequent days *supplications* were appointed by Mainmertus, bishop of Vienna, in the year 1469, to be offered up with fasting, to God, to avert some particular calamities that threatened his diocese.

*Why is Rogation Week, in the north of England, called gang week?*

Because *gang* there signifies to go; and at this time the people make parochial perambulations. Thus, *gang-days* were holidays; and *gadding about* originated in the same custom.

*Why is Whit Sunday, or Whiten Sunday, so called?*

Because, partly from the glorious light of heaven, which was this day sent down upon the earth, from the Father of lights; but principally, because this day being one of the stated times for baptism in the ancient church, those that were baptised put on *white garments*, as types of that spiritual purity which they received. — *Time's Telescope*, 1814.

*Why are certain feasts at Whitsuntide, &c, called ales?*

Because much ale was drank then: other etymologies have been attempted; but this is the most natural and most probable. There were bride-ales, clerk-ales, give-ales, lamb-ales, leet-ales, Midsummer-ales, scot-ales, Whitsun-ales, and several more. — *Nares*.

In Poor Robin's almanack for 1676, stool-ball and barley-break, are spoken of as Whitsun sports. In the almanack for the following year, in June, opposite Whitsunday and holidays, we read: —

' At Islington,	At Highgate and	At Totnam-court,
A fair they hold;	At Holloway,	And Kentish Town,
Where cakes and ale	The like is kept	And all those places,
Are to be sold.	Here every day.	Up and down.'

In 'antient tymes,' Whitsun plays were acted at this season. At Chester, these plays were twenty-five in number, and were performed for above three centuries, annually.

*Why is 'the Montem' celebrated every third year, on Whit Tuesday, at Eton?*

Because, in the opinion of Mr Lysons, it originated in the ceremonial of the Bairn, or Boy-Bishop. Mr Hakewill, (in his *History of Windsor*) asks, 'why may not this custom be supposed to have originated in a procession to perform an annual mass at the altar of some saint, to whom a small chapel might have been dedicated, on the mount called Salt Hill? — a ceremony very common in Catholic countries, as such an altar is a frequent appendage to their towns and populous villages. As for the selling of salt, it may be considered as a natural accompaniment, when its emblematical character, as to its use in the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church is contemplated.'

*Why is the first of May a festive holiday?*

Because its customs hail the return of Spring, and chiefly taken from our conquerors, the Romans. Hence, these festivities are as old as any we have on record. On the 4th of the calends of May, the Romans held their *Floralia*, or festival in honour of *Flora*.

Mr Borlase says: 'May customs are nothing more than a gratulation of the Spring, to testify universal joy at the revival of vegetation.' And Mr Douce observes, 'that there can be no doubt that the Queen of May is the legitimate representative of the goddess *Flora*, in the Roman festival.'

It was anciently the custom for all ranks of people to go out a maying, early on the first of May. Bourne tells us that in his time, in the villages in the north of England, the juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight on the morning of that day, and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and the blowing of horns, where they broke down branches from the trees, and adorned them with nosegays and crowns of flowers. This done, they returned homewards with their

booty, about the time of sunrise, and made their doors and windows triumph in the flowery spoil. 'There was a time when this custom was observed by noble and royal personages, as well as the vulgar.' — *Brand*.

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continued by force of habit, and of those superstitious ideas that are annexed to it.—*Gebelin*, cited by *Brand*, who thinks the leaping over the fires was as much a religious act as making them. Ovid mentions leaping over the fires at the Palilia, feasts in May, to drive away wolves from the folds, and distempers from the cattle. *Borlase* reckons them “among the relics of the Druid superstitious fires.”

*Why was it customary to watch at the church-porch at Midsummer-eve?*

Because it was believed, that persons so watching, would, at midnight, see the spirits of the persons of the parish who should die that year come and knock at the church-door, in the order and succession in which they were to die.—*Grose*.

*The Connoisseur*, No. 56, says, on this custom: “I am sure my own sister Hetty, who died just before Christmas, stood in the church porch last Midsummer-eve, to see all that were to die in our parish, and she saw her own apparition.”—This superstition was, however, more generally practised on the eve of *St. Mark*.

Gathering roses, and sowing hemp-seed for love divinations, were also Midsummer-eve customs. *Scot* also tells us: “against witches hang boughs, hallowed on Midsummer-Day, at the stall where the cattle stand.”

*Why is it said, that “if it rains on St. Swithin’s-Day, it will rain forty days following?”*

Because, in the year 865, Swithin, Bishop of Winchester dying, was canonized by the then Pope. He was, at his own request, buried in the church-yard; but the monks thinking it disgraceful for the saint to lie in open ground, resolved to remove his body into the choir, which was to have been done with solemn procession, on July 15. It rained, however, so violently on that day, and for forty days succeeding, as had hardly ever been known, which made them set aside their design, and instead, erect a chapel over his grave.



*Why were little knives given at Croyland Abbey, to all comers, on St. Bartholomew's Day?*

Because of their allusion to the knife wherewith St. Bartholomew was flead.—*Gough.*

*Why were the rood and cross synonymous?*

Because the rood, when perfectly made, and with all the appurtenances, had not only the image of our Saviour extended upon it, but the figures of the Virgin Mary and St. John, one on each side: in allusion to John xix. 26. "Christ on the cross, saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved, standing by."—*Fuller.*

Such was the rood usually placed over the screen which divided the nave from the chancel of the churches. To our ancestors, we are told, is thus conveyed a full type of the Christian church: the nave representing the church militant, and the chancel the church triumphant, denoting, that all who would go from the one to the other, must pass under the rood, that is, carry the cross, and suffer affliction. Many of our rood-lofts were not taken down till late in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.—*Ellis.*

*Why are sticks chopped and hob-nails counted by the City of London authorities, in the Court of Exchequer, on Michaelmas Day?*

Because the tenants of a manor in Shropshire are directed then to come forth to do their suit and service; on which the senior alderman below the chair steps forward, and chops a single stick, in token of its having been customary for the tenants of that manor to supply their lord with fuel. The owners of a forge in the parish of St. Clement, (which formerly belonged to the city, and stood in the high road from the Temple to Westminster, but now no longer exists) are then called forth to do their suit and service; when an officer of the court, in the presence of the senior alderman, produces six horse-shoes, and six hobnails, which he

counts over in form before the Cursitor-baron, who, on this particular occasion, is the immediate representative of his sovereign.—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

*Why is it customary to eat goose on Michaelmas Day?*

Because of its forming part of the royal dinner when the news was brought to Queen Elizabeth of the defeat of the Spanish Armada; when her chivalrous Majesty commanded, that the dish (a goose) then before her, might be served up on every 29th of September, to commemorate the above glorious event.

Mr. Douce saw the above reason "somewhere;" but Mr. Brand thinks this rather to be a stronger proof that the custom prevailed even at court in Queen Elizabeth's time. Beckwith, in his edition of Blount's *Tenures*, says, "Probably no other reason can be given for this custom, but that Michaelmas Day was a great festival, and geese at that time most plentiful. In Denmark, where the harvest is later, every family has a roasted goose for supper on St. Martin's Eve."—Bringing a goose "fit for the Lord's dinner" on this day, appears to have been customary even in the time of Edward IV.; and in Gascoigne is the following:—

"And when the tenautes come to pay their quarter's rent,  
They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish at Lent;  
At Christmasse a capon, at Michaelmas a goose,  
And somewhat else at new yere's tide, for feare their lease flie loose."

The practice of eating goose on Michaelmas Day, does not appear to prevail in any part of France. Upon St. Martin's Day they eat turkey at Paris. They likewise eat geese upon St. Martin's Day, Twelfth Day, and Shrove Tuesday, at Paris.—*Ellis's Notes to Brand*.

*Why was it said that "if you eat goose on Michaelmas Day, you will never want money all the year round?"*

Because, as we read in the *British Apollo*, before quoted—

"The custom came up from the tenants presenting  
Their landlords with geese, to incline their relenting  
On following payment."

Again:—

“ For doubtless ’t was at first designed  
To make the people *seasons* mind,  
That so they might apply their care  
To all those things which needful were ;  
And by a good industrious hand,  
Know when and how t’ improve their land.”

*Why is the first of August called Lammas ?*

Because it is a corruption of *Loaf-Mass*, it being customary for the Saxons to offer an oblation of new bread on this day, as the first fruits of the harvest ; and from its being observed with bread of new wheat, it was an usage in some places for the tenants to be bound to bring in wheat of that year to their lord, on or before August 1.

Mass, it may be added, was a general word for festival, as the festivals of Christ-mass, Candle-mass, &c.

*Why was it formerly thought in England, that every man had his guardian angel from the cradle to the grave ?*

Because the Egyptians believed that every man had three angels attending him ; the Pythagoreans that every man had two ; the Romans, that there was a good and evil genius. Sheridan, in his notes to Persius, says, “ every man was supposed by the ancients at his birth to have two genii, as messengers between the gods and him. They were supposed to be private monitors, who, by their insinuations, disposed us to good or evil actions. They were also supposed to be not only reporters of our crimes in this life, but registers of them against our trial in the next, whence they had the name of *Manes* given them.”

*Why has it been asked whether every man has a good and bad angel attending him ?*

Because the ministration of angels is certain, but the matter is how is the knot to be untied. ’Twas generally believed by the ancient philosophers, that not only kingdoms had their tutelary guardians, but that every person had his particular genius, or good angel, to pro-



tect and admonish him by dreams, visions, &c. We read that Origen, Hierome, Plato, and Empedocles, in Plutarch, were of this opinion; and the Jews themselves, as appears by that instance of Peter's deliverance out of prison; they believed it could not be Peter, but his angel. But for the particular attendance of bad angels, we believe it not, and we must deny it, till it finds better proof than conjectures.—*Athenian Oracle.*

*Why do weak persons pay attention to particular dreams?*

Because, probably, of this ancient notion of good and evil genii attending each person: the vulgar, it should seem, thinking dreams the means these invisible attendants make use of, to inform their wards of any imminent danger.—*Brand.*

*Why is St. Luke the patron of painters?*

Because he is said to have been very skilful in painting, especially in his portraits of Jesus Christ. The usual oath of King William (Rufus) was by the face of Christ depicted by St. Luke.

*Why is St. Crispin the patron-saint of shoemakers?*

Because Crispin, and his brother Crispianus, having travelled to Soissons, in France, in the year 303, to make converts to Christianity, they maintained themselves by *shoemaking*; whence they became regarded as the patrons of the "gentle craft." They were both born at Rome.

*Why is the 1st of November the festival of All Saints?*

Because it serves to commemorate all those saints and martyrs to whom no separate day has been assigned.

*Why is the 2nd of November the festival of All Souls?*

Because of its institution in the 9th century, by Odilon, Abbot of Cluny, to make intercession for the souls supposed to be detained in purgatory. The tortured soul once released, it is said, cannot again be

doomed to suffering. Various tenures were held by services to be performed on this day.

*Why is All-Hallow-Even in the north, vulgarly called Nutcrack Night?*

Because it is a festival in which nuts and apples compose the entertainment; when the nuts are thrown into the fire, or cracked, to propitiate omens touching matrimony: if the nuts lie still and burn together, they prognosticate a happy marriage or a hopeful love; if, on the contrary, they bounce and fly asunder, the sign is unpropitious.—*Hutchinson.*

Burns, in a note to his poetical description of Hallow-e'en, says: "Burning the nuts is a favourite charm: they name the lad and lass to each particular nut as they lay them in the fire; and, accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be." A similar custom, according to Mr. Ellis, prevails in Ireland. The superstitious notions in cracking nuts generally, is well known. Bonfires, ringing of bells, and feasting, are also customary on All-hallow-e'en.

*Why was it customary also to sow hemp on All-hallow-e'en?*

Because it was believed that by looking over the left shoulder, the sower might see his or her true love. The ceremony is thus described by Burns: "Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat, now and then, 'Hemp seed, I saw thee, hemp seed, I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee.' Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say "Come after me and show thee," that is, show thyself, in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say,

'Come after me, and harrow thee.' " Gay describes a similar rite at Midsummer. Burns likewise describes several other customs on this festival, as divination by pulling stalks of corn ; by blue clue ; eating the apple at the glass ; running round the stack three times, &c.

*Why is the seventeenth of November kept as a holiday?*

Because it is the anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth. A writer in the time of George I. observes: "This might well be a great promoter of the tallow-chandlers' welfare ; for *marvellous illuminations will be set forth in every window*, as emblems of her shining virtue ; and *will be stuck in clay*, to put the world in mind that grace, wisdom, beauty, and virginity, were unable to preserve the best of women from mortality."

*Why is St. Cecilia regarded as the patroness of music?*

Because tradition relates that she was so skilful a musician, that an angel who visited her was drawn from the mansions of the blessed by the charms of her melody ; to which circumstance Dryden alludes in the conclusion of his celebrated Ode to Cecilia.

*Why is an anchor the device of St. Clement?*

Because his legend relates that he was cast into the sea with an anchor about his neck ; and that on the first anniversary of his death, the sea retired from the place where he suffered, though three miles from the shore, and discovered a superb temple of the finest marble, which contained a monument to the saint. The sea withdrew in this way for several years, for seven days in succession. In allusion to this circumstance, the device of an anchor may be seen in various parts of the Church of St. Clement Danes, London, and on the boundary marks of the parish.

*Why is a certain firework called the Catherine wheel?*

Because of its resemblance to the instrument of torture by which St. Catherine, according to the legend, suffered martyrdom. This was by four cutting wheels,

in which were saws of iron, sharp nails, and sharp knives; the wheels turned one against another, and thus the saws, knives, and nails met. She was so tied to one of the wheels, that the other, being turned the contrary way her body might be torn in various places with the sharp instruments—hence, St. Catherine is usually represented with a large wheel by her side.

*Why is old Martinmas still noticed in our almanacks on Nov. 23?*

Because it was one of the ancient quarterly periods of the year, at which even to this time, a few rents become payable.—*Brady's Clavis Calendaria*, 1812.

*Why is St. Andrew's cross part of the insignia of the Scottish order of the Thistle?*

Because Andrew is the tutelar Saint of Scotland, and he suffered martyrdom on a cross in the form of an X. The Scotch likewise assert that his remains were deposited in Fifeshire, in the year 368.

*Why is St. Nicholas the chosen patron of schoolboys?!*

Because of the following circumstance, related in a story in an Italian Life of Nicholas, 3rd edition, 4to. Naples, 1645.

“The fame of Nicholas's virtues was so great, that an Asiatic gentleman, on sending his two sons to Athens for education, ordered them to call on the Bishop for his benediction; but they, getting to Mira late in the day, thought proper to defer their visit till the morrow, and took up their lodgings at an inn; where the landlord, to secure their baggage and effects to himself, murdered them in their sleep, and then cut them into pieces, salting them, and putting them into a pickling tub with some pork, which was there already, meaning to sell the whole as such. The Bishop, however, having had a vision of this impious transaction, immediately resorted to the inn, and calling the host to him, reproached him for his horrid villainy. The man, perceiving that he was discovered, confessed

the crime, and entreated the Bishop to intercede on his behalf to the Almighty for his pardon; who, being moved with compassion at his contrite behaviour, confession, and thorough repentance, besought Almighty God not only to pardon the murderer, but also, for the glory of his name, to restore life to the poor innocents who had been so inhumanly put to death. The Saint had hardly finished his prayer, when the mangled and detached pieces of the two youths were by divine power reunited; and perceiving themselves alive, threw themselves at the feet of the holy man, to kiss and embrace them. But the Bishop, not suffering their humiliation, raised them up, and exhorted them to return thanks to God alone for this mark of his mercy, and gave them good advice for the future conduct of their lives; and then, giving them his blessing, he sent them with great joy to prosecute their studies at Athens. This, I suppose, sufficiently explains the naked children and tub, 'the well-known emblems of St. Nicholas.'

The election of the Boy-Bishop on St. Nicholas's Day, in almost every parish in England, has been traced to the thirteenth century. He wore the episcopal vestments, with mitre and crosier, and, strange as it may appear, he took possession of the church, and, except mass, performed all the ceremonies and offices.

The Boy-Bishop walked about in procession with his fellows; in 1542 this show was abrogated. The practice of electing a Boy-Bishop appears also to have subsisted in common grammar-schools. Mr. Warton thinks that the Montem at Eton (*see p. 23.*) "originated from the ancient and popular practice of theatrical processions in collegiate bodies;" but Mr. Brand shows that it is only a corruption of the ceremony of the Boy-Bishop and his companions; who being, by Henry the Eighth's edict, prevented from mimicking any longer their religious superiors, gave a new face to the festivity, and began their present *play at soldiers*. This shows how early our youth began to



imitate the martial manners of their elders in these sports, for it appears from the Close Rolls of Edward I. that a precept was issued to the Sheriff of Oxford, in 1305, from the king, "to prohibit tournaments being intermixed with the sports of the scholars, on St. Nicholas' Day."

*Why is St. Nicholas the patron of Parish Clerks?*

Because scholars were anciently denominated *clerks*. In Shakspeare's first part of Henry IV. Act 2. sc. i. *robbers* are called St. Nicholas's *clerks*. They were also called St. Nicholas's knights. St. Nicholas being the patron of scholars, and Nicholas, or Old Nick, a cant name for the devil, this equivocal patronage may possibly be solved; or perhaps it may be much better accounted for by the story of St. Nicholas and some thieves, whom he compelled to restore some stolen goods, and brought "to the way of trouth;" for which the curious reader is referred to the Golden Legend.—*Ellis's Notes to Brand*.

Sir Walter Scott, it may be added, attributes the origin of Old Nick, as a cant name for Satan, to Nixas, or Nicksa, a river or ocean god, worshipped on the shores of the Baltic. Hence, the British sailor, who fears nothing else, confesses his terror for this terrible being, and believes him the author of almost all the various calamities to which the precarious life of a seaman is so constantly exposed.—*Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*.

*Why was St. Nicholas considered the patron of sailors?*

Because of the two boys in a tub (part of the saint's emblems) being mistaken for their sailing in a ship. Armstrong, speaking of Ciudadella, says: "Near the entrance of the harbour stands a chapel, dedicated to St. Nicholas, to which the sailors resort that have suffered shipwreck, to return thanks for their preservation and to hang up votive pictures, representing the

*Why is Christmas-day so called?*

Because of its derivation from *Christi Missa*, the mass of Christ; and thence the Roman Catholic Liturgy is termed, their *Missal*, or *Massbook*. About the year 500, the observation of this day became general in the Catholic Church.

*Why was the word Yule formerly used to signify Christmas?*

Because of its derivation from the word *ol*, *ale*, which was much used in the festivities and merry meetings of this period; and the *I* in *Iol*, *icol*, *Cimb*, as the *ze* and *zi* in *zehol*, *zeol*, *ziol*, Sax. are premised only as intensives, to add a little to the signification, and make it more emphatical. *Ol*, or *Ale*, did not only signify the liquor then made use of, but gave denomination to the greatest festivals (see page 22) as that of *zehol* or *Yule*, at Midwinter; and as is yet plainly to be discovered in that custom of the Whitsun ale at the other great festival.

*Why are certain initials affixed to crucifixes?*

Because of their signifying the titular tributes paid to the Saviour of the world. Thus, *I. N. R. I.* are universally agreed to be the initials of the Latin words *Jesus Nazareus Rex Judæorum*, i. e. Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, a title which Pilate wrote and affixed to the cross.—See John, ch. xix. the initials *I. H. C.* appended to other crosses, are said to imply, *Jesus Humanitatis Consolator*,—Jesus the Consoler of Mankind; and the *I. H. S.* imply, *Jesus Hominum Salvator*, Jesus the Saviour of men. The first mentioned initials, are, however, found on the most ancient crosses.

*Why is a certain song called a carol?*

Because of its derivation from *cantare*, to sing, and *rola*, an interjection of joy.—*Bourne*.

Bishop Taylor observes that the "Gloria in excelsis," the well-known hymn sung by the angels to the

shepherds at our Lord's nativity, was the earliest Christmas carol. Bourne cites Durand to prove that in the earlier ages of the Churches, the Bishops were accustomed on Christmas-day, to sing carols among their clergy. Fosbroke says: "It was usual, in ancient feasts, to single out a person, and place him in the midst, to sing a song to God." And Mr. Davies Gilbert states, that till lately, in the West of England, on Christmas-eve about seven or eight o'clock in the evening, festivities were commenced, and "the singing of carols begun, and continued late into the night. On Christmas-day, these carols took the place of psalms in all the churches, especially at afternoon service, the whole congregation joining, and at the end it was usual for the parish-clerk to declare, in a loud voice, his wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy new year to all the parishioners."

Mr. Hone observes in his work on "Ancient Mysteries," that "the custom of singing carols at Christmas, prevails in Ireland to the present time. In Scotland, where no church fasts have been kept since the days of John Knox, the custom is unknown. In Wales it is still preserved to a greater extent, perhaps, than in England: at a former period, the Welsh had carols adapted to most of the ecclesiastical festivals, and the four seasons of the year, but, at this time, they are limited to that of Christmas. After the turn of midnight, on Christmas-eve, service is performed in the churches, followed by singing carols to the harp. Whilst the Christmas holidays continue, they are sung in like manner in the houses; and there are carols especially adapted to be sung at the doors of the houses by visitors before they enter. *Lffyr Carolan*, or the Book of Carols, contains sixty-six for Christmas, and five summer carols. *Blodengerdd Cymrui*, or the Anthology of Wales, contains forty-eight Christmas carols, nine summer carols, three May carols, one winter carol, one nightingale carol, and a carol to Cupid. On



the Continent, the custom of carolling at Christmas is almost universal. During the last days of Advent, Calabrian minstrels enter Rome, and are to be seen in every street saluting the shrines of the Virgin mother with their wild music, under the traditional notion of charming her labour pains on the approaching Christmas."

*Why do the Christmas carols of the present day differ from the carols of earlier times?*

Because the original carols were festal chansons for enlivening the merriment of the Christmas celebrity; and not such religious songs as are current at this day, with the common people, under the same title, and which were substituted by those enemies of innocent and useful mirth, the Puritans.

Dr. Johnson, in a note on Hamlet, tells us, that the pious chansons, a kind of Christmas carol, containing some Scripture History, thrown into loose rhymes, were sung about the streets by the common people, when they went at that season to beg alms.—*Brand.*

*Why is laurel used with other evergreens to deck houses at Christmas?*

Because of its use among the ancient Romans as the emblem of peace, joy, and victory. In the Christian sense, it may be applied to the victory gained over the powers of darkness by the coming of Christ.—*Bourne.*

*Why is the mistletoe so called?*

Because its seeds are said to be dropped by the misle-thrush, which feeds on its berries.

*Why was the mistletoe held sacred by the Druids?*

Because they had an extraordinary reverence for the number three, and not only the berries, but the leaves of the mistletoe grow in clusters of three united on one stalk. Its growing upon the oak, their sacred tree, was doubtless another cause of its veneration.

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marched with great solemnity to gather the misletoe of the oak, in order to present it to Jupiter, inviting all the world to assist them at this ceremony, with these words: "The new year is at hand, gather the misletoe."—*Borlase*.

We read of a celebrated oak at Norwood, near London, which bore misletoe, "which some people cut for the gain of selling it to the apothecaries of London, leaving a branch of it to sprout out; but they proved unfortunate after it, for one of them fell lame, and others lost an eye. At length, in the year 1678, a certain man, notwithstanding he was warned against it, upon the account of what the others had suffered, adventured to cut the tree down, and he soon after broke his leg."—*Camden*.

Mr. Brand, however, thinks that misletoe was never put up in churches but by mistake or ignorance of the sextons; it being a heathenish and profane plant, and therefore assigned to the kitchen. Mr. Brand made many diligent inquiries after the truth of this point. He learnt at Bath that it never came into churches there. An old sexton at Teddington told him that misletoe was once put up in the church there, but was by the clergyman immediately ordered to be taken away.

*Why is holly so called?*

Because of its supposed corruption from *holy*, as Dr. Turner, our earliest writer on plants, calls it holy and holy-tree; which appellation was given it, most probably, from its being used in holy places. It has a great variety of names in Germany; amongst which is *Christdorn*; in Danish it is also called *Christhorn*; and in Swedish *Christtorn*, amongst other appellations: from whence it appears that it is considered a holy plant by certain classes in those countries.—*Phillips's Sylva Florifera*,



in which were saws of iron, sharp nails, and sharp knives; the wheels turned one against another, and thus the saws, knives, and nails met. She was so tied to one of the wheels, that the other, being turned the contrary way her body might be torn in various places with the sharp instruments—hence, St. Catherine is usually represented with a large wheel by her side.

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*Why is rosemary so called?*

Because its botanical name, *rosmarinus*, is derived from *ros*, dew, and *marinus*, alluding to its situation on the sea-shore. At Christmas, the boar's head was stuffed with rosemary.

*Why was the boar's head formerly a prime dish at Christmas?*

Because fresh meats were then seldom eaten, and brawn was considered a great delicacy. Holinshed says, that "in the year 1170, upon the day of the young prince's coronation, King Henry I. served his sonne at table as server, bringing up the boar's head with trumpets before it, according to the manner." For this ceremony there was a special carol. Dugdale also tells us, that "at the inns of court, during Christmas, the usual dish at the first course at dinner, was a large *bore's head*, upon a silver platter, with minstralsaye." In one of the carols we read that the boar's head is "the rarest dish in all the londe, and that it has been provided in honour of the king of bliss."

*Why were mince-pies originally made in a long shape at Christmas?*

Because they might imitate the cratch, that is, rack or manger wherein Christ was laid.—*Selden*.

*Why was one of the ancient Christmas characters called a Lord of Misrule?*

Because of the origin of the office from an Imperator or master of the plays exhibited at the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge: or, it may be more directly explained by the election of mock monarchs for the season, among public societies during Christmas. In Polydore Vergil, we find such brief authorities mentioned as "*Christemass Lordes*," to whom all the household and family, with the master himself, must be obedient; and that the custom began of the equability that servants had with their masters in the Saturnalia.

Warton tells us "when the Societies of the Law performed their shows within their own respective refectories, at Christmas, or any other festival, a Christmas Prince, or Rood Master, was constantly appointed. At a Christmas celebrated in the hall of the Middle Temple, in the year 1635, the jurisdiction privileges, and parade of this mock monarch are thus circumstantially described. "He was attended by his Lord Keeper, Lord Treasurer, with eight white staves, a Captain of his Band of Pensioners, and of his Guard; and with two Chaplains, who were so seriously impressed with an idea of his regal dignity, that when they preached before him on the preceding Sunday in the Temple Church, on ascending the pulpit, they saluted him with three low bows. He dined both in the Hall and in the Privy Chamber, under a cloth of estate. The pole-axes for his Gentlemen Pensioners were borrowed of Lord Salisbury. Lord Holland, his temporary Justice in Eyre, supplied him with venison on demand; and the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London with wine. On Twelfth Day, at going to Church, he received many petitions which he gave to his Master of Requests; and, like other Kings, he had a favourite, whom with others, gentlemen of high quality, he knighted at returning from church. His expenses all from his own purse, amounted to £2000." After he was deposed, the King knighted him at Whitehall. Stow likewise tells us that the King, every Nobleman, and the Mayor and Sheriffs of London, each had their Lord of Misrule. The name only of the Lord of Misrule is now remembered: for the gloomy Puritans of the reign of James I. suppressed their ludicrous, though costly, frolics.

*Why are men and women merry-making and dressed in each other's clothes called Mummers?*

Because Mummer signifies a masker; one disguised under a wizard; from the Danish Mummie, or Dutch



Momme. Lipsius tells us, in his 44th epistle, book iii, that Momar, which is used by the Sicilians for a fool, signifies in French, and in our language, a person with a mask on. In Langley's Polydor Vergil we read that "the disguising and mummyng that is used in Christmas tyme in the northe partes came out of the Feastes of Pallas, that were done with vizars and painted visages, named Quinquatria of the Romaynes."

The festal character of December and the two following months, it may here be observed, is thus explained by the author of the "Convivial Antiquities," who says, "that as the heathens had their Saturnalia in December, their Sigillaria in January, and the Lupercalia and Bacchanalia in February, so, amongst Christians, these three months are devoted to feasting and revellings of every kind."

*Why was Christmas called the Feast of Lights in the Western or Latin Church?*

Because they used many lights or candles at the feast; or rather because Christ, the light of all lights, that true light, then came into the world. Hence the Christmas candles, and what was, perhaps, only a succedaneum, the yule block, or clog, before candles were in general use. Thus, a large coal is often set apart at present, in the north, for the same purpose; i. e. to make a great light or yule on Christmas-eve. Lights, indeed, seem to have been used on all festive occasions. Thus, our illuminations, fire-works, &c. on the news of victories.

The lower class of Irish, in the present time, illuminate their rooms with mould candles; and to this customary illumination at Christmas may be traced the practice of tallow-chandlers giving "Christmas candles" to the children of their customers.

In ancient times, to which we could trace up the origin of these almost obsolete customs, blocks, logs, or clogs of dried wood, might be easily procured and

provided against this festive season. At that time of day it must have been in the power but of a few to command candles or torches for making their annual illumination.—*Brand*—who, however this may be, is “pretty confident that the yule block will be found, in its first use to have been only a counterpart of the Midsummer Fires, (*see page 27*) made within doors because of the cold weather at the winter solstice, as those in the hot season, at the summer one, are kindled in the open air.

*Why are gifts at Christmas called Christmas boxes?*

Because in olden times, the Roman Priests had *masses* for almost every thing: if a ship went to the Indies, a priest had a *box* in her, under the protection of some saint; and for their *masses* to be said to that saint, the poor people put something into the priest's box, which was not to be opened till the ship's return. The mass at that time was called *Christmass*; the box called *Christmass-box*, or money gathered against that time, that *masses* might be made by the priests to the saints to forgive the people their sins at that time; and from this, servants had the liberty to get *box-money* that they too might be enabled to pay the priest for his *masses*, well knowing the truth of the proverb, “no penny, no pater-noster.” Fosbroke says an altar was erected in every village, where persons gave money. The apprentices' boxes were formerly made of pottery; and Aubrey mentions a pot, in which Roman *denarii* were found, resembling in appearance an earthen Christmas-box.

*Why is the Wassail-bowl so called?*

Because of its derivation from the Saxon *was-haile*, “be in health,” which was the form of drinking a health; the customary answer to which was *drinc-heil*, “I drink your health.”

*Verstegan* refers it to the time of Hengist, but Selden justly considers it as older.—*Nares*.

Verstegan traces its origin to Vortigern and Rowena, the daughter of Hengist.—On their first interview, she kneeled before him, and presenting a cup of wine, said, *Hlaford Kyning, waes-hail*, "Lord King, health be to you." The king, being unacquainted with the Saxon language, asked the meaning of the terms, and being told, that they wished his health, and that he should answer by saying *Drinc-heil*, he did so, and commanded her to drink; then taking the cup, he kissed the damsel and pledged her. From this time the custom long remained in Britain, that whoever drank to another at a feast said *was heil*, and he that received the cup answered *drinc-heil*. The *wassail songs* were sung during the festivities of Christmas, and in earlier times by the itinerant minstrels; of whom, with the practice some remains may be traced in our present *waits and carols*. The *wassail-cup* was anciently placed on the tables of princes, as well as of abbots. In the eleventh volume of the "Archæologia," there is an engraving of one of these cups, which formerly belonged to Glastonbury abbey, and a dissertation upon it by Dr. Milner. The inside of the cup, which holds two quarts, is furnished with eight pegs, at equal distances, one below the other, in conformity with Edgar's law, to repress excess of drinking. This measurement allowed of half a pint to each person; no doubt this law was "more honoured in the breach than in the observance."

*Why has the custom of wassailing been restricted to Christmas?*

Because an image of our Saviour was originally carried about with the wassail-cup, to which it has been considered as an appendage.

*Why is it customary, in some districts, to roast apples on Christmas-eve?*

Because roasted apples were formerly carried about

with the wassail-cup ; and though wassailing is discontinued, the apple custom remains.

*Why are waits so called?*

Because of the derivation of the term from *wayghtes*, or hautboys, of which, it is not unworthy of remark, there is no singular number. From the instrument its signification was after a time transferred to the performers themselves. The *wayghtes* or waits of ancient times were attendant musicians on great personages, mayors, and bodies corporate, generally furnished with superb dresses, or splendid cloaks ; they were in the service of the court in the reign of Edward IV. and had their regular allowance of coals, pitched candles, bread, ale, &c. Todd derives the term from *waits* ; nocturnal itinerant musicians, (Beaumont and Fletcher ;) Bayley on account of their waiting on magistrates, &c. or of *guet*, a watch ; or from the French *guetter* to watch ; because anciently they kept a sort of watch all night. It appears, therefore, that the persons formerly called waites, or waits, were musical watchmen, the word implying *oboes*. They were, in fact, minstrels, at first annexed to the King's Court, who sounded the watch every night ; and in towns, paraded the streets, during winter, to prevent theft. At Exeter they were set up with a regular salary, in 1400 ; and although suppressed by the Puritans, were reinstated in 1660.\*—*The Mirror*, 1827.

*Why are waits supposed to be of heathen origin?*

Because they correspond with a description of persons among the Romans, called *spondaulæ*, from which, it is supposed the *wayghts* or *waits* of our ancient kings were borrowed. The Roman *waites*, or *spondaulæ*, played and sung hymns during sacrifices, whose measure consisted of *spondees* or poetic feet of two long syllables.—*The Mirror*, 1827.

\* The King's *Cock-crower*, an officer comparatively but lately dispensed with by the English Court, probably originated from this system of watching.

*Why have commentators puzzled themselves as to the actual food of St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness—locusts and wild honey?*

Because some writers thought locusts improbable food for the Saint, and accordingly substituted the cassia-fistulata, or *locust-tree*, &c.; whereas locusts are an article of food in Persia and Arabia in the present day, they are fried until their wings and legs fall off, and in that state are eaten with rice and dates, &c. and the *wild honey* is found in the clefts of the rocks in Judæa as abundantly as in the caves of Hindustan.—*Forbes's Travels*.

*Why has Childermas, or Innocents' Day, been superstitiously considered of unlucky omen?*

Because of the murder of the Jewish children by Herod on this day. Brand (from Bourne) says, none ever marry on a Childermas-day. Melton, in his Astrologer, says, it is not lucky to put on a new suit, or begin any thing, on that day. The coronation of Edward IV. was put off till the Monday, because the preceding Sunday was Childermas-day. The learned Gregory tells us that it was customary, among thrifty housewives, "to whip up the children on Innocents' Day morning, that the memorie of Herod's murder of the Innocents might stick the closer; and, in a moderate proportion, to act over the crueltie again in kinde."

In allusion to the festivals of St. Stephen, St. John, and that of Innocents, Mr. Wheatley has observed, "that, as there are three kinds of martyrdom; the first, both in will and deed, which is the highest; the second, in will but not in deed; the third, in deed but not in will;—so the Church commemorates three martyrs in the same order. St. Stephen first, who suffered both in will and deed; St. John next, who suffered in will, but not in deed; the Holy Innocents last, who suffered in deed but not in will."

*Why were certain days superstitiously considered lucky or unlucky?*

Because of a custom among the heathens of observing one day as good, another as bad: some were *dies atri*, and some *dies albi*. The *atri* were pointed out in their calendar with a black character,\* the *albi* with a white; the former to denote it a day of bad success, the latter a day of good. Thus have the monks, in the dark and unlearned ages of popery, copied after the heathens, and dreamed themselves into the like superstition, esteeming one day more successful than another.—*Bourne*.

Grose tells us, that many persons have certain days of the week and month on which they are particularly fortunate, and others in which they are as generally unlucky. These days are different to different persons. Mr. Aubrey has given several instances of both in divers persons. Some days, however, are commonly deemed unlucky; and, among others, Friday labours under that opprobrium. (See *Good Friday*, p. 16.) Likewise, respecting the weather, there is this proverb:—

—————Friday's moon,  
Come when it will, it comes too soon.

In the Calendar prefixed to Grafton's "Manual," or Abridgement of his Chronicle, 1565, the unlucky days, according to the opinion of the Astronomers, are noted, as follows: "January 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 15, 17, 29, very unlucky. February 26, 27, and 28, unlucky; 8, 10, 17, very unlucky. March 16, 17, 20, very unlucky.

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\* Who does not recollect *Black Monday*, or the first Monday after his return to school. The great Lord Burleigh, in his "Preceptes to his sonne," says, "Though I think no day amisse to undertake any good enterprise or businesse in hande, yet have I observed some and no meane clerkes very cautionarie to forbear these three Mundayes in the yeare, which I leave to thine owne consideration, either to use, or to refuse;—viz. 1. The first Munday in April, which day Caine was born, and his brother Abel staine. 2. The second Munday in August which day Sodome and Gomorrah were destroyed. 3. The last Munday in December, which day Judas was born, that betrayed our Saviour Christ."

April 7, 8, 10, 20, unlucky; 16, 21, very unlucky. May 3, 6, unlucky; 7, 15, 20, very unlucky. June 10, 22, unlucky; 4, 8, very unlucky. July 15, 21, very unlucky. August 1, 20, 30, unlucky; 19, 20, very unlucky. September 3, 4, 21, 23, unlucky; 6, 7, very unlucky. October 4, 16, 24, unlucky; 6, very unlucky. November, 5, 6, 20, 30, unlucky; 15, 20, very unlucky. December 15, 22, unlucky; 6, 7, 9, very unlucky.

The observances of such absurdities, both in ancient and modern times, in particular districts, would occupy hundreds of pages. Sir John Sinclair notices, in 1793, Logierait, Perthshire, where "that day of the week upon which the 14th of May happens to fall, is esteemed unlucky through all the remainder of the year; none marry or begin business upon it. None choose to marry in January or May; or to have their banns proclaimed in the end of one quarter of the year, and marry in the beginning of the next. Some things are to be done before the full moon; others after. In fevers, the illness is expected to be more severe on Sunday, than on the other days of the week; if easier on Sunday, a relapse is feared." In some parts of Orkney, we also read, "in many days of the year they will neither go to sea in search of fish, nor perform any sort of work at home."

Sir Walter Scott tells us, that the Scottish, even of the better rank, avoid marriage in May. "This objection is borrowed from the Roman pagans; and the ancients have given us a maxim, that it is only bad women who marry in that month,—*malæ nubent Maia*."—See *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*.

It is hardly necessary to say a word upon these absurdities. The pretended accuracy with which they were marked out by our ancestors, will at least explain their popular observance.

*Why does Fasting differ from Abstinence in the Catholic Church?*

Because fasting implies that only one meal a day

is to be taken; whereas abstinence merely indicates the abstaining from animal food.

*Why do Catholic priests so often change the colour of their dresses?*

Because different colours are used on different festivals: thus, the white is used on the feasts of our Lord, of the Virgin, and of all the saints who are not martyrs. The red is used at Whitsuntide, on the Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, and on the feasts of the apostles and martyrs. The purple, or violet, which is the penitential colour, is used on all the Sundays and *ferias* of Advent, and of the penitential time from Septuagesima till Easter: as also on vigils, ember-days, and rogation-days, when the office is of them. Green is also used on Sundays and *ferias* from Trinity to Advent exclusively, and from the Octave of the Epiphany to Septuagesima exclusively, whenever the office is of the Sunday; but in the Paschal time the white is used. The black is used on Holy (or Good) Friday, and in masses and requiems for the dead; which may be said on any day that is not a Sunday or a double, except the days from Palm Sunday to Low Sunday; and during the Octaves of the Epiphany, of Pentecost, and of Corpus Christi. Paschal time begins on Holy Saturday, and continues to the first vespers on the eve of Trinity Sunday. We quote this from the "Circle of the Seasons," the editor of which, a zealous Catholic, observes, that "many of his readers, who may not be Catholics, but who occasionally go into Catholic chapels, may be curious to know the rules observed in the choice of colours for the priests' dresses."

*Why are the musical chants of the Catholic Church still retained in Latin?*

Because they depend, for metrical effect, on the marked accents and powerful rhymes which the Latin language affords.



*Why were texts of Scripture formerly general on church-walls ?*

Because they were first written there condemning images, upon their removal from churches in England, in 1547.—*Stow.*

#### DOMESTIC LIFE.

*Why are unmarried females called Spinsters ?*

Because, formerly, women were prohibited from marrying till they had spun a regular set of bed furniture, and till their marriage were consequently called *Spinsters*, which continues till this day in all legal proceedings.

*Why does the wedding-ring finger differ from the others ?*

Because it is the only finger where *two* principal nerves belong to two distinct trunks ; the thumb is supplied with its principal nerves from the radial nerve, as is also the fore finger, the middle finger, and the thumb side of the ring finger ; whilst the ulnar nerve furnishes the little finger and the other side of the ring finger, at the point or extremity of which a real union takes place ; it seems as if it were intended by nature to be the matrimonial finger.

That the side of the ring finger next the little finger is supplied by the ulnar nerve, is frequently proved by a common accident, that of striking the elbow against the edge of a chair, a door, or any narrow hard substance ; the ulnar nerve is then frequently struck, and a thrilling sensation is felt in the little finger, and on the same side of the ring finger, but not on the other side of it.

*Why was a newly married man formerly called a bridegroom ?*

Because groom signifies one who serves in an inferior station ; and it was customary for the newly married man to wait at table on his bride and friends on his wedding-day.

*Why is a month after marriage called the Honey-Moon?*

Because of its origin from a custom of the Teutones, an ancient people of Germany, to drink mead, or metheglin, a beverage made with honey, for thirty days after every wedding.

*Why is an allowance to ladies called pin-money?*

Because pins were acceptable new year's gifts to ladies, instead of the wooden skewers which they used till the end of the fifteenth century; and instead of the gifts, a composition was sometimes received in money.

*Why is it customary with many persons to present spoons at christenings, or at lying-in visits?*

Because of the ancient English custom of presenting spoons, called *apostle-spoons*, from the figures of the twelve apostles being chased or carved on the tops of the handles. Persons who could afford it gave the set of twelve; others a smaller number, and a poor person offered the gift of one, with the figure of the saint after whom the child was named, or to whom the child was dedicated, or who was the patron saint of the good-natured donor.—A set of these spoons will be found engraved in Mr. Hone's *Every-Day Book*, 1825.

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*Why is the middle meal of the day called dinner?*

Because of its corruption from decimer, from *decim-heure*, or the French *repas de dix-heures*.

*Why is the last meal called supper?*

Because of a similar corruption from *souper*, from the custom of providing soup for that occasion.

*Why is not sallet-oil a corruption of salad-oil, as is commonly supposed?*

Because the former was used for cleaning the *sallet*, or head-piece of defensive armour in ancient times, and was much less pure than oil used for salads.

Though the sallet is now entirely out of date, yet the oil partially retains its name.—*Gent. Mag.*

*Why is a loin of beef called a sirloin?*

Because Charles II. once dining upon a loin of beef, was so pleased with his fare, that he said it should be knighted, and the joint henceforth called *Sir-loin*.

*Why is furmety so called?*

Because of its derivation from *frumentum*, wheat; it being made of that grain, first boiled plump and soft, and then put into and boiled in milk, sweetened and spiced.

*Why is the phrase "humble pie" used for humiliation?*

Because, in the middle ages, the shanks and feet of a buck being called umbles, were made into a pie for the retainers or feudal servants.

*Why are mattresses considered of great antiquity?*

Because they were used by the ancients on couches, upon which, at public festivals, were often laid the images of the gods. They are also sculptured upon several ancient tombs, bearing the figures of the deceased personage. The celebrated Hermaphrodites are also represented on mattresses.

*Why is weaving considered of high antiquity?*

Because it is mentioned by Abraham, (*Genesis* xiv. 22.) "I will not take from a thread of the woof, even to a shoe latchet, &c."

*Why is certain fine lincn called Damask?*

Because it was first manufactured in perfection, at Damascus, in Syria.

*Why is a rug so called?*

Because of its contraction from *rugget*, Swedish for rough.

*Why is the covering of a coach-box called a hammer-cloth?*

Because, when coaches were first introduced, our frugal forefathers used to load the carriage with provisions for the family, when they came to London. The *hamper*, covered with a cloth, was a convenient repository, and a seat for the coachman. This was afterwards converted into a box. Hamper-cloth is, therefore, probably a corruption of *hamper-cloth*.

*Why is Falstaff's basket called a Buck-basket?*

Because *Bouk* is the Scotch word for a ley used to steep foul linen in, before it is washed in water. The *buck-basket*, therefore, is the basket employed to carry clothes, after they have been *bouked*, to the washing-place.—*Jamieson*.

*Why are black, white, yellow, brown, blue and violet, all worn as mourning by different nations?*

Because black, (the ordinary mourning in Europe,) or the privation of light, is supposed to denote the privation of life; white (China) is an emblem of purity; yellow (Egypt) is to represent that death is the end of all human hopes, because this is the colour of leaves when they fall; brown (Ethiopia) denotes the earth, to which the dead return; blue (kings and cardinals,) is an emblem of happiness, which, it is hoped, the deceased enjoys; and violet (Turkey) is supposed to express a mixture of sorrow and hope.

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*Why were the titles of Lord and Lady first adopted?*

Because of the origin of *lord* from the Saxon *laford*, or loaf-giver, from his maintaining a number of dependents: and *lady* from *leaf-dien*, or *loaf-dian*, i. e. loaf-server, she serving it to the guests, or carving at table.

*Why has a literary lady been satirically termed a Blue-Stocking?*

Because of the origin of the term from the Society "de la Calza," (of the *Stocking*) formed at Venice in

the year 1500; the members being distinguished by the colour of their stockings, the prevailing colour of which was *blue*. The Society de la Calza lasted till the year 1590, when the foppery of Italian literature took some other symbol. The rejected title then crossed the Alps, and branded female pedantry in Paris. It diverged from France to England, and for awhile marked the vanity of the small advances in literature of our female coteries. But the propriety of its application is now gradually ceasing; for we see in every circle, that attainments in literature can be accomplished with no loss of womanly virtue.—*Mills' Hist. of Chivalry.*

*Why do servants' liveries differ?*

Because they originated in our British ancestors clothing their vassals in uniform, to distinguish families; as they painted arms and symbols on their clothes for the same purpose.

*Why were vineyards extirpated from England?*

Because (as affirmed in the *Biographia Britannica*), "of some treaty of peace between France and England, in which it is stipulated, that we should root up our vineyards, and be their customers for all our wine." This is quoted by Mr. Ellis, in his *Introduction to Domesday*, who adds: "if such extirpation of the English vineyards was not owing to this, it might be to the falling of Gascony into the hands of the English, whence wine was imported cheaper and better than we could make it."

*Why were the libations to the gods, in Roman sacrifices, sometimes made with milk?*

Because of the great scarcity of wine, which was not in general use till about 600 years U. C.

*Why were the Roman women saluted by their near relations on receiving visits from them?*

Because the visitors might smell whether the women

had tasted any wine, which gave their husbands a right to punish them, or even to kill them.

*Why did the Roman drunkards take pumice-stone before drinking for a wager ?*

Because it might excite their thirst. This probably gave rise to the invention of "devils," common among the toppers of our times.

*Why are chequers painted against the sides of public-houses ?*

Because, in early times, a chequered board, the emblem of calculation, was hung out, to indicate an office for changing money. It was afterwards adopted as the sign of an inn, or hostelry, where victuals was sold, or strangers lodged and entertained.

*Why is the horse-keeper at an inn, called an ostler ?*

Because *ostler* is derived from the word *hostel*, which was formerly obtained from the French, and was in common use here to signify an inn ; and the innkeeper was from thence called the *hosteller*. This was at a period when the innkeeper or *hosteller* would be required by his guests to take and tend their horses, which, before the use of carriages, and when most goods were conveyed over the country on the backs of horses, would be a chief part of his employment ; and hence, the *hosteller* actually became the *hostler*, or *ostler*, that is the horse-keeper.—*Hone*.

*Why is it said that "good wine needs no bush ?"*

Because, in early times, before inns were established on public roads, those who had wine to sell, by way of a sign, hung out a bush ; hence it became a saying, that "good wine would find customers without a bush."

*Why is a drinking-glass called a rummer ?*

Because of its corruption from the Dutch *roemer*.

*Why is a milk-man's reckoning called a tally ?*

Because it is a relic of the rude contrivance of registering by tallies, introduced into England at the period



of the Norman conquest. These consist of straight, well-seasoned sticks, of hazel or willow, so called from the French word *tailler*, to *cut*, because they are squared at each end. The sum of money was marked on the side with notches, by the cutter of tallies, and likewise inscribed on both sides by the writer of the tallies. The smallest notch signified a penny, a larger one a shilling, and one still larger a pound; but other notches, increasing successively in breadth, were made to denote ten, a hundred, or a thousand. The stick was then cleft through the middle by the deputy chamberlains, with a knife and a mallet; the one portion being called the *tally*, and the other the *counter-tally*, or *folium*.

Hence also the origin of the tally-trade, or receiving payment for goods by instalments.

*Why are mixed liquors called "grog"?*

Because Admiral Vernon, who was the first to mix his sailors' allowance of spirits with water, was nicknamed "Old Grog," from his wearing a gogram coat, and this name was given to the mixed liquor he compelled his fleet to drink.

*Why did tavern-keepers originally call portions of liquor "goes"?*

Because of the following incident, which, though unimportant in itself, convinces us how much custom is influenced by the most trifling occurrences.

The tavern called the Queen's Head, in Duke's Court, Bow Street, was once kept by a facetious individual of the name of Jupp. Two celebrated characters, Annesley Spay and Bob Todrington, a sporting man, meeting one evening at the above place, went to the bar, and each asked for half a quartern of spirits, with a little cold water. In the course of time, they drank four-and-twenty, when Spay said to the other, "Now we'll go."—"O no," replied he, "we'll have another, and then go." This did not satisfy the

gay fellows, and they continued drinking on till three in the morning, when both agreed to go ; so that, under the idea of going, they made a long stay. Such was the origin of drinking, or calling for, *goes*.

— *Etymological Compendium.*

*Why was the house built by David Hartley, on Putney Heath, fireproof?*

Because it was built with double floors, between the boards of which were sheets of iron and copper ; thus rendering the floor air-tight, and intercepting the ascent of heated air ; so that, although the inferior boards were actually charred, the metal prevented the combustion of the superior boards ; although the sheets were not thicker than tin-foil, or stout paper.

In 1774, the king and queen breakfasted in an upper room of Hartley's house, while, in the room beneath, fires were lighted on the floor, &c ; and in this, and other experiments, the fires in the lower rooms had been so strong, that parts of the joists in the floor above were charred, although the boards which lay upon them were in no degree affected. Parliament voted Mr Hartley 2,500*l*, to defray the expenses of this building : the invention has sunk into obscurity, although the spot is recorded by a pompous obelisk.

*Why is a chimney-piece also called a 'mantel'?*

Because it is work raised before a chimney, to conceal it, *mantel* originally signifying a cloak.

*Why are chimneys comparatively of modern origin?*

Because they are not mentioned earlier than the year 1347. If the houses of the ancient Romans had been furnished with chimneys, Vitruvius would have described them ; yet not a word about them is to be found in his works. Nor does Julius Pollux, who made a collection of the Greek names of all parts of habitations, give a word for them, any more than Grapaldus, who, in more modern times, formed a vocabulary of all the Latin words used in architecture.



That there were no chimneys in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, seems proved by the curfew (*couvre feu*) of the English and Normans. In the lower ages, the fire was made in a sort of stove, which the law required should be covered up on retiring to bed. The allusion at the above date (1347) is to an earthquake at Venice, which threw down many chimneys.

*Why is it probable that the Britons taught the art of basket-making to the Romans?*

Because Martial mentions a basket brought to Rome by painted Britons; whence we infer that baskets of British manufacture were esteemed in the capital of the world.

*Why do we conclude that earthenware was first introduced into Britain by the Romans?*

Because, in the locality of the present Staffordshire potteries, are found, on sinking pits, very evident remains of Roman potteries, and at a considerable depth below the present surface of the land. It is supposed, also, that one of the principal Roman potteries was on a small island (now sunk) at the mouth of the Thames, from the numerous fragments of earthen vessels which the fishermen often find entangled in their nets.

*Why is glass so called?*

Because of its resemblance to ice, (*glacies*) or, as others suppose, from *glastum*, the English *wood*, a vegetable which is employed in dyeing *blue*; glass having generally a tinge of blue in its appearance. — *Blancourt on Glass.*

*Why is the hole in a gun called the touch-hole?*

Because our fire-arms were at first discharged by applying a lighted match to the touch-hole, and consequently by *touching* the hole, as is now done in firing great guns. And though that method is now left off, by means of the later improvement of the lock, the hole still keeps its old name.

*Why is a French-horn so called, although made of metal?*

Because, at first, *horns* were used both for blowing and drinking; and the name continued, though both the drinking and the blowing horn were made of ivory, silver, brass, &c.

*Why is treacle so called?*

Because it is a corruption of *theriacal*, originally *theriaca*, an antidote to the bite of a serpent. Though the treacle of the apothecary, and the grocer's treacle, or molasses, are not now used with any such intention, they still keep a name borrowed from the first intention of the medicine or antidote. — *Gent. Mag.*

*Why is the broom so called?*

Because it was formerly made of the shrub *broom*; although the name is now applied to implements made of birch, or hogs' bristles.

*Why was a candlestick formerly called a candlestaff?*

Because, before metals were used, nothing but a stick was employed, and the candle held by a slit at one end, or three nails driven in the stick.

*Why is a mirror so called?*

Because of its origin from the French, *mirer*, to look at.

*Why is soap considered to be of high antiquity?*

Because it is mentioned by one of the Hebrews: 'Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me. — *Jeremiah*, ii, 22.

*Why is the web of the spider called a cobweb?*

Because cobweb is from the Dutch word *kopwebbe*; and *kop* in that language signifies a spider.

#### LAW.

*Why were woolsacks first used in the House of Lords?*

Because, in the reign of Elizabeth, an act of parliament was passed to prevent the exportation of

English wool; and the *woolsacks* on which the judges sat, were placed there to remind them to watch this staple commodity of the kingdom.

*Why was the Saxon Parliament called the Wittenagemot?*

Because a *witte* was anciently a wise man; and the *wittenagemot* an assemblage of wise men.

*Why is a member of parliament said to accept the Chiltern Hundreds?*

Because he wishes to retire; but as he cannot resign, the king may grant him the office of steward to the Chiltern Hundreds, the acceptance of which vacates his seat. The Chiltern Hundreds are crown lands in Bedfordshire and Bucks, not far from Aylesbury; their topographical name arising from the chalky nature of the hills, of which they principally consist.

*Why are certain electors called pot-wallapers?*

Because they derive their right to vote from having a fire-place, on which they may *wallop*, or boil a pot. *Pot-waller*, used in the acts of parliament, is not so correct an expression as the common one.

*Why was the celebrated cabinet council of Charles II, called the Cabal?*

Because the initials of the names of the five councillors formed that word, thus—

Clifford  
Arlington  
Buckingham  
Ashley  
Lauderdale.

*Why is Common Law also termed Lex non scripta, or unwritten law?*

Because it is not set down in writing, as acts of parliament are.

*Why are the sittings of law-courts called terms?*

Because of their origin from *Terminus*, the heathen god of boundaries.

*Why is the Court of King's Bench so called?*

Because our kings formerly presided there, as judges do now.

*Why is the Court of Exchequer so called?*

Because a *chequered* cloth anciently covered the table where the chief officers sat. — *Maitland*.

*Why is the Prerogative Court so called?*

Because of the Prerogative of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who by a special privilege, can here try all disputes concerning wills and administrations of persons who have left goods of five pounds value, without the diocese wherein they died; unless settled by composition.

*Why was the Star Chamber so called?*

Because of its derivation from *Starrum*, a barbarous word for a Jewish contract. — *Barrington*. It is also said to have been named from its roof being painted with silver or gilt stars.

*Why is one of our Law Colleges called Doctors' Commons?*

Because the several courts and offices of which the college is now composed, were anciently dispersed, and held in several parts of the city of London, which being relative, and in some measure depending one upon another, occasioned great inconvenience to the respective practitioners; wherefore the doctors and proctors of the several courts, united in a collegiate manner, and by dining together in common, obtained the appellation of 'Doctors' Commons.'

*Why is one of our Law Courts called 'the Arches'?*

Because it was formerly held in the Church of St Mary-le-Bow, which was built on *arches*.

*Why are certain writs called Habeas Corpus, &c?*

Because they were the first Latin words with which they began when they were written in Latin; or, at least, from some remarkable word in them. In a writ of *Latitat*, the person sued is supposed to conceal himself — from *Latitat*, he lies hid.

*Why are sheriff's officers vulgarly called bum-bailiffs?*

Because the latter is a corruption of bound-bailiffs, so called from their being bound to the sheriffs for the due execution of their duties.

*Why is a certain law officer called a tipstaff?*

Because he attends the judges with a staff tipped with silver, and takes into his charge all prisoners who are committed or turned over at judges' chambers.

*Why have judges a nosegay placed before them in court?*

Because it is the relic of a primitive and ancient custom of the judge holding the *bough* or sceptre of justice, in his hand; it was formerly called a bouquet or little bough, whence the French took their word *bouquet*, for a nosegay.

*Why were jurors originally confined from meat and drink?*

Because of the propensity of the olden Britons to eat and drink to excess, whence it became expedient to hold them in custody until they had agreed upon their verdict.

*Why are surgeons exempt from serving on coroners' juries?*

Because, in the year 1513, the corporation of surgeons, consisting of twelve, a number being then thought equal to the care of the metropolis, petitioned parliament to be exempt from bearing arms or serving on juries and parish offices; and their petition was successful. — *Andrews's Hist. of England.*

*Why are butchers exempt from serving on coroners' juries?*

Because of an act of parliament passed 1661, for that purpose. Upon this bill it is observed : ' It is very strange that so judicious and humane an enactment had not been passed before ; not that they (butchers) should be considered as devoid of the common feelings of humanity, but more liable to its infirmities, from their avocations necessarily compelling them to the performance of a duty incompatible with those feelings which they hitherto had been called upon to exercise in the capacity of jurymen.' *McQueen's Historical Records.*

*Why are chartered and corporation towns supposed to have origin in garrison service ?*

Because the generality of such towns have been garrisons ; and the corporations were charged with the gates of the towns, when no military garrison was present. Their refusing, or granting, admission to strangers, which has produced the custom of giving, selling, and buying freedoms, has more of the nature of garrison authority than civil government.

Soldiers are free of all corporations throughout the kingdom, by the same propriety that every soldier is free of every garrison, and no other persons are. He can follow any employment, with the permission of his officers, in any corporation town.

*Why is a city hall called a Guildhall ?*

Because Guild signified among the Saxons a fraternity, derived from the Saxon word *to pay* : every man paid his share towards the expenses of the community, whence the place of meeting was called Guild, or Guildhall.

*Why is the Lord Mayor of London annually presented to the Lord Chancellor ?*

Because, though King John granted to the citizens of London a charter, empowering them to choose their own mayor, yet by the same power



they were generally obliged to present him to the king for his approbation, or, in his absence, to his justiciary.

*Why is a chief magistrate called a Mayor?*

Because of its origin from the Teutonic *Meyer*, a lover of might.

*Why is the Court of Pie Poudre so called?*

Because of its origin from *pie poudre*, *curia pedis pulverizati*, from the dusty feet of the suitors; or, as Sir Edward Coke says, because justice is there done as speedily as dust can fall from the feet. Blackstone thinks with Daines Barrington, it is from *pie poldreaux*, (a pedlar in old French) and says it signifies the court of petty chapmen at fairs or markets. Fosbroke says, courts similar to *pie poudre* courts were common among the Greeks and Romans, who introduced fairs into Germany and the North.

*Why is the dagger quartered in the London arms?*

Because it was granted in commemoration of Sir William Walworth, who, having felled Wat Tyler with his mace, despatched him with his dagger.

*Why are certain parishes said to be within the Bills of Mortality?*

Because, during the plague of 1592-5, bills or registers of these parishes were kept, to ascertain the number of persons who died; but when the pestilence ceased, the bills were discontinued. They were resumed in 1603. — *Pennant*.

*Why was the nightly watch first established in London?*

Because upon the discontinuance of the curfew-bell in the time of Henry I, as Stow observes, 'it followed, by reason of warres within the realm, that many men gave themselves up to robbery and murders in the night;' and the City of London was subject to these disorders till 1253, when Henry III, commanded

watches to be kept in cities and borough towns, for the preservation of the peace, and further, that if from that time any murder or robbery was committed, the town in which it was done should be liable to the damages thereof.

*Why are certain outrages called the Black Art?*

Because (according to Blackstone,) of its origin from devastations committed near Waltham, in Hampshire, by persons in disguise, or with their faces blackened, who seem to have resembled the Roberdsmen, or followers of Robert Hood, that in the reign of Richard I, committed great outrages on the borders of England and Scotland.

It seems that many years ago, a party of the inhabitants of this town retired to a recluse dell in the New Forest, whence they issued forth in the night; and their numbers rendering them formidable, they committed great depredations in the neighbourhood, killing deer, sheep, &c, for their subsistence. As they commonly made their appearance in the night, and were disguised, moreover, as above mentioned, they were called the 'Waltham Blacks.' The place of their retreat was a recess, accessible only by a subterranean passage. They dressed like foresters; the cross-bow was their weapon; and it is asserted that they called themselves the descendants of Robin Hood. In this licentious state, they remained a considerable time, till at last they were dispersed by the activity of the neighbouring gentlemen, and have not since infested the country.

*Why were the old robbers called cut purses?*

Because formerly before the introduction of pockets, purses were carried in the hand or borne at the side, when the thieves cut them away, and carried them off with the contents. Pickpockets are of modern origin: they came up with the wearing of pockets.

*Why were strong liquors formerly administered to the criminals before execution?*

Because the strength of the liquor might stupify



their senses, or deaden their feeling of pain; this, says the Talmud, was given immediately before the execution began, and consisted of a cup of wine mingled with a quantity of frankincense. Certain charitable or compassionate women at Jerusalem were engaged to prepare this draught, which they did by mixing with the wine drugs or bitter herbs to produce stupefaction. Pennant likewise tells us, that a practice somewhat similar prevailed in England; it being customary to present to malefactors on their way to the gallows, in ancient times, a large bowl of ale, as the last refreshment they were to receive in this life.

The foundation of this custom appears to have been laid in the command of Solomon, 'Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy heart.' Allusion is made to the same species of drink in the book of the prophet Jeremiah, written nearly four hundred years afterwards. Perhaps of a similar nature was the bowl of wine which Homer tells us Helen presented to her guests, when oppressed with grief, to raise their spirits; the composition of which she had learned from the Egyptians:

Meanwhile, with genial joy to warm the soul,  
Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl;  
Temper'd with drugs of sovereign use, t'assuage  
The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage;  
Charin'd with that virtuous draught, the exalted mind  
All sense of woe delivers to the wind.

*Why is 13½d said to be 'hangman's wages'?*

Because the Scottish mark, (not ideal or nominal money, like our mark,) was a silver coin, in value thirteen-pence half-penny, and two placks, or two-thirds of a penny, which plack is likewise a coin. Thus, their mark, bears the same proportion to their pound, which is twenty-pence, as our mark does to our pound, or twenty shillings, being two-thirds of it. This Scottish mark was, upon the union of the

two crowns, in the person of James I, made current in England, at the value of thirteen-pence half-penny. This, probably, was a revolution in the current money in favour of the hangman, whose fee before was perhaps no more than a shilling. There is, however, very good reason to conclude, from the singularity of the sum, that the odious title of *hangman's wages*, became, at that time or soon after, applicable to the sum of thirteen-pence half-penny. Though it was contingent, yet it was then very considerable pay, when one shilling per day was a standing annual stipend to many respectable officers of various kinds.

*Why is political change called 'ratting'?*

Because of the following circumstance:—In Spain, when the famous Duke of Lerma was overthrown, all the Lermates disappeared in a few days. At the fall of the Duke of Lerma, which occasioned so many removals from office, our James I, expressing his astonishment, inquired the cause of the facetious Gondemar, who replied in the following apologue. To illustrate the fall of the duke and his creatures, he told how, once two rats, having entered a palace, were delighted at the spacious apartments, and the frequent banquets. They whisked about unmolested, — every day seemed a festival, — and they at last concluded that the palace was built for them. Their presence was not even suspected. But, grown bolder by custom, they called in shoals of rats and ratlings, and each filled his appointment. Some were at the larder, some were in the dinning-room, some here, and some there. The little rapacious creatures were a race of lascivious livers; they dipped their whiskers in every dish, and nibbled at the choicest morsels. Not a department but had its rats. The people in the palace now began to cry out that there were rats without number; and having once made up their minds as to the fact, they laid traps for them here and there, and cast ratsbane up and down the palace. — *D'Israeli*.

*Why is a man put on his trial called a culprit?*

Because of the corruption of the replication of the clerk of arraigns to the plea — *non culpabilis*. 'Cul' (for *culpabilis*), 'prit,' that is, 'ready to prove you so.' — *Blackstone*.

Another conjecture is, that the clerk, after the plea of not guilty, expressed a benign wish in French, '*Qu'il parait*,' may it appear so — which was corrupted into the word '*culprit*.'

*Why are lawyers also called attorneys?*

Because, in the time of our Saxon ancestors, the freemen in every shire met twice a year, under the precedency of the shire-reeve, or sheriff, and this meeting was called the Sheriff's Torn. By degrees, the freemen declined giving their personal attendance, and a freeman who did attend, carried with him the proxies of such of his friends as could not appear. He who actually went to the Sheriff's Torn, was said, according to the old Saxon, to go 'at the Torn,' and hence came the word *attorney*; which signified one that went to the Torn for others, carrying with him a power to act or vote for those who employed him. The distinction between attorney and solicitor arises from the latter practising in a Court of Equity, and the former only in a Court of Law. — *Heraldic Anomalies*.

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**KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PEOPLE:**

**OR THE**

**PLAIN WHY AND BECAUSE.**

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**PART VI —SPORTS AND PASTIMES.**

**PART VI.**

**B**

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## SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

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### HUNTING.

*Why is it inferred that hunting was practised by the ancient Britons?*

Because Dionysius (who lived 50 B. C.) says, that the inhabitants of the northern part of this island tilled no ground, but lived in great part upon the food they procured by hunting. Strabo (nearly contemporary) also says, that the dogs bred in Britain were highly esteemed upon the continent, on account of their excellent qualities for hunting.

Cæsar tells us, that venison constituted a great portion of their food; and as they had in their possession such dogs as were naturally prone to the chase, there can be little doubt that they would exercise them for procuring their favourite diet; besides, they kept large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, both of which required protection from the wolves and other ferocious animals that infested the woods and coverts, and must frequently have rendered hunting an act of absolute necessity.—*Strutt*.

Absenteeism has, of course, contributed much to the decay of field sports in England. This occasioned a celebrated politician to say, "he would willingly bring in one bill to make poaching felony; another to encourage the breed of foxes; and a third to revive the decayed amusements of cock-fighting and bull-baiting

—that he would make, in short, any sacrifice to the humours and prejudices of the country gentlemen, in their most extravagant form, providing only that he could prevail upon them to dwell in their own houses, be patrons of their own tenantry, and the fathers of their own children.”—*Quarterly Review*, No. 74.

*Why is hunting considered more ancient than hawking?*

Because, in the earliest ages of the world, hunting was a necessary labour of self-defence, or the first law of nature, rather than a pastime; while hawking could never have been adopted from necessity, or in self-protection.

Strutt tells us, that the earliest among the treatises on hunting that he has met with, is dated early in the fourteenth century; and that hawking most commonly forms a part of these treatises; and, though this practice can only be considered as a modern invention comparatively with hunting, yet it has obtained the precedence.

Upon the antiquity of hunting there is a coincidence in the sacred scriptures and the fabulous traditions of the poets. Thus, we read in the former, that Nimrod was “a mighty hunter before the Lord.” Hunting, proscribed in the book of Moses, is apotheosized in mythology, under the tutelage of Diana.

*Why was hunting originally considered a royal and noble sport?*

Because, as early as the ninth century, it formed an essential part of the education of a young nobleman. Alfred the Great was an expert and successful hunter before he was twelve years of age. Among the tributes imposed by Athelstan, upon a victory over Constantine, King of Wales, were, “hawks and sharp-scented dogs, fit for hunting of wild beasts.” Edward the Confessor “took the greatest delight to follow a pack of swift hounds in pursuit of game, and to cheer them with his voice.”—*Malmesbury*. Harold, his



successor, rarely travelled without his hawk and hounds. William the Norman, and his immediate successors, restricted hunting to themselves and their favourites. King John was particularly attached to field sports, and even treated the animals worse than his subjects. In the reign of Edward II, hunting was reduced to a perfect science, and rules established for its practice; these were afterwards extended by the *master of the game* belonging to Henry IV, and drawn up for the use of his son, Henry Prince of Wales, in two tracts, which are extant. Edward III, according to Froissart, while at war with France, and resident there, had with him sixty couple of stag-hounds, and as many hare-hounds, and every day hunted or hawked. Gaston, Earl of Foix, a foreign nobleman, contemporary with Edward, also kept 600 dogs in his castle for hunting. James I. preferred hunting to hawking or shooting; so that it was said of him, "he divided his time betwixt his standish, his bottle, and his hunting; the last had his fair weather, the two former his dull and cloudy."

The bishops and abbots of the middle ages hunted with great state, and some of them were skilful sportsmen. Walter, Bishop of Rochester, in the 13th century, hunted at the age of fourscore, to the total neglect of his episcopal duties; and in the succeeding century, an abbot of Leicester surpassed all the sportsmen of his time in hare-hunting; and these dignitaries even travelled from place to place upon affairs of business, with both hawks and hounds in their train.

In former times the ladies often joined hunting parties, and had parties among themselves. Queen Elizabeth was extremely fond of the chase, and hunted at the age of 77; and an author of the seventeenth century speaks of certain fair huntresses of Bury, in Suffolk, who equipped themselves for the chase entirely as men; a custom, we may add, "more honoured



in the breach than the observance." Still, they uniformly wore habits, as in the present day.

Ladies' hunting dresses, of the fifteenth century, as figured in Strutt's Sports, &c. differ but little from the modern riding habit.

According to the ancient books of the practice of sportsmen, the seasons for hunting were as follows:—The time of grace begins at Midsummer, and lasteth to Holyrood day (14th September). The fox may be hunted from the Nativity to the Annunciation of our Lady (25th March); the roe-buck from Easter to Michaelmas; the roe from Michaelmas to Candlemas (Feb. 2.); the hare from Michaelmas to Midsummer. The wolf, as well as the fox and the bear, from the Nativity to the Purification of our Lady, (Feb. 2.)

*Why are greyhounds still petted by ladies?*

Because in former times they were considered as valuable presents, especially among the ladies, with whom they appear to have been peculiar favourites. In an ancient metrical romance (Sir Eglamore), a princess tells the knight, that if he was inclined to hunt, she would, as an especial mark of her favour, give him an excellent greyhound, so swift that no deer could escape from his pursuit.—*Strutt*.

*Why were certain forests called royal chases?*

Because the privileges of hunting there were confined to the king and his favourites; and, to render these receptacles for the beasts of the chase more capacious, or to make new ones, whole villages were depopulated, and places of divine worship overthrown; not the least regard being paid to the miseries of the suffering inhabitants, or the cause of religion.—*Strutt*.

Blount tells us that there formerly existed a very cruel law, which subjected all the dogs that were found in the royal chases and forests, excepting such as belonged to privileged persons to be maimed, by

having the left claw cut from their feet, unless they were redeemed by a fine. This law probably originated with the Normans, and certainly was in force in the reign of Henry I.

*Why were lands first imparked?*

Because their owners might still more effectually preserve deer and other animals for hunting. Stowe tells us, that the park at Woodstock, in Oxfordshire, seven miles in circumference, and walled round with stone by Henry II. was the first made in England. The royal example was first followed by Henry Earl of Warwick, who made a park at Wedgenoke, near Warwick; after which, the practice of park-making became general among persons of opulence.

A recent French newspaper gave notice of an association for the purpose of enabling persons of all ranks to enjoy the pleasure of the chase. A park of great extent is to be taken on lease near Paris; its extent is about 6000 acres, partly arable, and partly forest ground. The plan is, to open it to subscribers during six months, viz. from September 1 to March 1, an ample stock of game being secured in preserves.

*Why were parks and inclosures usually attached to priories?*

Because they were receptacles of game for the clergy of rank, who at all times had the privilege of hunting in their own possessions. At the time of the Reformation, the see of Norwich only was in the possession of no less than thirteen parks, well stocked with deer and other animals for the chase.—*Spelman*.

The eagerness of the clergy for hunting is described as irrepressible. Prohibitions of councils produced little effect. In some instances a particular monastery obtained a dispensation. Thus, that of St. Denis, in 774, represented to Charlemagne that the flesh of hunted animals was salutary for sick monks, and that their skins would serve to bind books in the library.

Alexander III, by a letter to the clergy of Berkshire, dispenses with their keeping the archdeacon in dogs and hawks during his visitation.—(*Rymer*.) An archbishop of York, in 1321, carried a train of 200 persons, who were maintained at the expense of the abbeys on his road, and who hunted with a pack of hounds from parish to parish!—*Whitaker's Hist. of Craven*, quoted in *Hallam's Hist. Middle Ages*.

*Why was hunting formerly a very convenient resource for the wholesomeness, as well as luxury, of the table?*

Because the natural pastures being then unimproved, and few kinds of fodder for cattle discovered, it was impossible to maintain the summer stock during the cold season. Hence a portion of it was regularly slaughtered and salted for winter provision. We may suppose, therefore, that when no alternative was offered but these salt meats, even the leanest venison was devoured with relish.—*Hallam's Hist. Middle Ages*.

*Why were all the great forests pierced by those long rectilinear alleys which appear in old prints, and are mentioned in old books?*

Because the avenues were particularly necessary for those large parties, resembling our modern *battues*, where the honoured guests being stationed in fit *standings*, had an opportunity of displaying their skill in venery by selecting the buck which was in season, and their dexterity at bringing him down with the cross-bow or long-bow.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in his description of Chantilly, speaks of a forest, which, "being of a very large extent, and set thick both with tall trees and underwood, was replenished with wild boar, stags and roe-deer, and was cut into long walks every way, so that although the dogs might follow their chase through the thickets, the huntsmen might ride along the said walks, and meet or overtake their game in some one of them, they being cut with that art, that they led to all the parts in the said forest."

*Why should a deer-park exhibit but little artificial arrangement in its disposal?*

Because the stag, by nature one of the freest denizens of the forest, can only be kept even under comparative restraint, by taking care that all around him intimates a complete state of forest and wilderness. Thus, there ought to be a variety of broken ground, of copse-wood, and of growing timber—of land, and of water. The soil and herbage must be left in its natural state; the long fern, amongst which the fawns delight to repose, must not be destroyed.

*Why did the common people formerly call the forest "good," and the greenwood "merry?"*

Because of the pleasure they took in the scenes themselves, as well as in the pastimes which they afforded.

*Why is a short gallop called a canter?*

Because of its abbreviation from Canterbury, the name of the pace used by the monks in going to that city.

*Why was a certain noise called the "hunt's-up"?*

Because it was made to rouse a person in a morning; originally a tune played to wake the sportsmen, and call them together, the purport of which was, *The hunt is up!* which was the subject of hunting ballads also.

This expression is common among the older poets. One Gray, it is said, grew into good estimation with Henry VIII. and the Duke of Somerset, "for making certaine merry ballades, whereof one chiefly was, *the hunte is up, the hunte is up!*" Shakspeare has,

Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
Hunting thee hence with *hunts-up* to the day.

*Romeo and Juliet.*

Again, in Drayton's *Polyolbion* :

No sooner doth the earth her flow'ry bosom brave,  
At such time as the year brings on the pleasant spring,  
But *hunts-up* to the morn the feather'd sylvans sing.



*Why is a small hunting horn called a bugle?*

Because of its origin from *bugill*, which means a buffalo, or perhaps any horned cattle. In the Scottish dialect it was *bogle*, or *bougill*. *Buffe*, *bugle*, and *buffalo*, are all given by Barrett, as synonymous for the wild ox.—*Nares' Glossary*.

*Why is the stirrup so called?*

Because of its origin from *stigh-rope*, from *stigan ascendere*, to mount; and thus termed by our Saxon ancestors, from a rope being used for mounting when stirrups began to be used in this island. It is evident, from various monuments of antiquity, that, at first, horsemen rode without either saddles or stirrups.

*Why are sportsmen said to hunt counter?*

Because they hunt the wrong way, and trace the scent backwards. Thus, in an old work, *Gentleman's Recreations*: "When the hounds or beagles hunt it by the heel, we say they hunt counter." To hunt by the heel must be to go towards the heel instead of the toe of the game, i. e. backwards.—*Nares*.

*Why were wolves extirpated much sooner in England and Wales, than in any other country of Europe?*

Because many tributes were paid, and tenures held, by the annual production of a certain number of wolves' skins. Thus, the Welsh paid tribute to King Edgar, in the tenth century, which he commuted for 300 wolves' heads. Malmesbury says, the tribute ceased on the fourth year for want of wolves. In England, in 10th William I, Robert de Unfranville, knight, held the lordship of Riddesdale, in the county of Northumberland, by service of defending that part of the country from enemies and *wolves*. Fitzstephen does not mention that wolves existed in his time in the great forest north of London. Edward I, however, issued his edict to "Maister Peter Corbet" to superintend their destruction. In 43d Edward III, Thomas Eugaine held lands in Pitchley, Northampton,



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by service of finding, at his own cost, certain dogs for the destruction of wolves, foxes, &c. in the counties of Northampton, Rutland, Oxford, Essex, and Buckingham; and as late as the 11th year of Henry VI, Sir Robert Plumpton held land in the county of Nottingham, called *wolf-hunt land*, by service of winding a horn, and chasing or frightening the wolves in the forest of Shirewood.—See more in *Blount's Ancient Tenures*.

For a variety of information respecting wolves, dogs, and hunting generally, we refer the reader to Part II. of the present work,—*Quadrupeds*, p. 19 to 24.

*Why is hare-hunting comparatively of modern date?*

Because, in early times, the Britons did not eat the flesh of hares, notwithstanding the island abounded with them; which abstinence arose from a principle of religion.—*Cæsar*.

Strutt adds, "which principle, no doubt, preserved them from being worried to death; a cruelty reserved for more enlightened ages."

Hares are extremely interesting in their melancholy characteristics. They are so timid as to be fascinated by fear: even a falling leaf disturbs them. They live in solitude and silence, except occasionally assembling by moonlight to sport together, when their savage enemies are asleep. Their cries, when taken, resemble those of an infant; but this appeal to man, though in the semblance of his own nature, is ineffectual. Cowper domesticated three hares, and his account of them is full of pathos and fine feeling: what congenial companions must they have been in his melancholy musings. Who does not remember, in his epitaph on a hare:

I kept him for his humour's sake,  
For he would oft beguile  
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
And forc'd me to a smile.

Thomson says,

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare:



—a sentiment but ill responded in his epicurism. The analogous sensibilities of the hare may be carried to better account: timid men in the world, resemble hares in the chase.

*Why was "a hart of ten" so called?*

Because he was past his sixth year, and had ten branches on his horns.

*Why is the cry of the deer called "bell"?*

Because of its abbreviation from the word bellow. In an ancient inscription on the house of Wharncliff, we are informed that the lodge was built in Henry the Eighth's time by one gentle knight, Sir Thomas Wortley, that he might hear the buck *bell* in the summer season,—a simple record which speaks much to the imagination.

*Why was the fine called "white hart silver," imposed?*

Because Henry II. and his retinue having, in the chase just mentioned, run over and spoiled the lands of Thomas de la Linde, and refusing to make good the injury, De la Linde, and others, by way of revenge, ran down and killed the king's favourite hart, and making merry over its haunches, spoke disrespectfully of their sovereign. Upon this reaching the ears of the king, he made every one concerned in the death of the royal animal pay into the exchequer an annual fine called "White Hart silver," which was not remitted during the reign of that monarch.

*Why is a white hart, with a collar, so common as an inn sign throughout England?*

Because Henry II, one day in Blackmoor forest, started a milk-white hart, which afforded the king and his train so much sport, that at the pulling down it was the royal pleasure to save the beast, and place round his neck a collar of brass, on which was engraved "I am a royal hart, let no one harm me."

Another explanation of the hart wearing a metal collar is traced to the stag said to have been taken in

the forest of Senlis, by Charles V, about the neck of which was a collar with the inscription,

“Cæsar hoc mihi donavit;”

which induced a belief that the animal had lived from the reign of some of the twelve Cæsars. This inscription also exists in the following form:—

Tempore, quo Cæsar Româ, dominatus in altâ  
Aureolo jussit collum signare moniti;  
Ne depascentem quisquis me gramina lædat,  
Cæsaris heu causâ, peritura parcere vitâ;

which has been thus translated:—

“When *Julius* Cæsar reigned king,  
About my neck he put this ring;  
That whosoever did me take,  
Should spare my life for Cæsar’s sake.”

It appears, however, that *Julius* Cæsar is gratuitously preferred by the English paraphrist, nothing appearing in the original inscription to determine its reference more to *Julius* Cæsar than to *Domitian*. On the Dorchester road from *Sturminster*, we are informed there is, or recently was, a public house called “The King’s Stag;” its sign displaying a stag with a gold collar round its neck, with nearly the above subscription.

*Why was the Common Hunt established in the City of London?*

Because of a charter granted by *Henry I.* to the citizens, to “have chases, and hunt as well and as fully as their ancestors have had; that is to say, in the *Chiltre*, in *Middlesex*, and *Surrey*.”—(*Mailland*.) *Fitzstephen* (*Henry II.*) says, that “the *Londoners* delight themselves with hawks and hounds; for they have the liberty of hunting in *Middlesex*, *Hertfordshire*, all *Chiltern*, and in *Kent* to the waters of *Grey*,” which differs somewhat from the charter. These exercises were not much followed by the citizens of *London* at the close of the sixteenth century; not for want of taste for the amusement, but for leisure to pursue it. (*Stow*.) *Strype*, however, so late as the reign of

George I., reckons among the modern amusements of the Londoners, "riding on horseback, and hunting with my Lord Mayor's hounds, when the *common hunt* goes out."

*Why was the Epping Hunt first appointed?*

Because of a privilege granted to the citizens to hunt, with other places, in Hainault Forest, of which Epping Forest is part.

The Common Hunt of the City is ridiculed in an old ballad, in D'Urfey's "Pills to purge Melancholy," 1719; in which he thus characterizes the Lord Mayor:—

My lord he takes a staff in hand to beat the bushes o'er,  
I must confess it was a work he ne'er had done before;  
A creature bounceth from a bush which made them all to laugh,  
My lord he cried "a hare, a hare," but it proved an Essex calf.

The "Hunt" has not "scap'd whipping" even in our times, in the ballad entitled "The Epping Hunt," by the facete Thomas Hood.

*Why are certain terms used exclusively by sportsmen?*

Because of their origin from a peculiar kind of language invented by the sportsmen of the middle ages, which it was necessary for every lover of the chase to be acquainted with. Thus, when beasts went together in companies, there was said to be a herd of harts, of bucks, and all sorts of deer; a bevy of roes; a slott of bears; a singular of boars; a sownder of wild swine; a dryft of tame swine; a route of wolves; a harras of horses; a rag of colts; a stud of mares; a pace of asses; a barren of mules; a team of oxen; a drove of kine; a flock of sheep; a tribe of goats; a skulk of foxes; a cete of badgers; a richness of martins; a fes-ignes of ferrets; a huske or a down of hares; a nest of rabbits; a clowder of cats, and a Kendal of young cats; a shrewdness of apes; and a labour of moles. And also of animals when they retired to rest; a hart was said to be harbored, a buck lodged, a roe-buck bedded, a hare formed, a rabbit set, &c. Two grey-

hounds were called a brace, three a leash; but two spaniels or harriers were called a couple. We have also a mute of hounds for a number, a kennel of raches, a litter of whelps, and a cowardice of curs.—*Strutt.*

## HAWKING.

*Why is hawking generally placed at the head of rural amusements?*

Because of its being so generally followed by the nobility, not only in this country, but also on the continent. In olden times, persons of high rank rarely appeared without their dogs and their hawks; the latter they carried with them when they journeyed from one country to another; and sometimes even when they went to battle, and would not part with them even to procure their own liberty when taken prisoners. These birds were considered as ensigns of nobility; and no action could be reckoned more dishonourable to a man of rank, than to give up his hawk. Upon the tapestry of Bayeaux, Harold is represented approaching the Duke of Normandy, with his hawk upon his hand. Sometimes hawks formed part of the train of an ecclesiastic: Becket had hawks and hounds of every description with him, when he went to the Court of France, as ambassador from England. Females of distinction were, occasionally represented with hawks on their hands, as we know, from an ancient sculpture, in the Church of Milton-Abbey, where the consort of King Athelstan appears, with a falcon on her fist, tearing a bird. The Welsh had a saying in very early times, that "you may know a gentleman by his hawk, horse, and greyhound." Alfred the Great is said to have written a treatise on hawking; and from various sources the pastime may be traced in high favour, to the end of the Saxon era.—*Strutt.*

In the fields, and open country, hawking was followed on horseback; and on foot, when in the woods and



coverts. In the latter case the sportsman had with him a stout pole, to assist him in leaping over rivulets and ditches; and we learn from Hall, the chronicler, that Henry VIII, pursuing his hawk on foot, at Hitcham, in Hertfordshire, was plunged into a deep slough, by the breaking of his pole, and would have been stifled but for prompt assistance.

We may gather some idea of the value attached to hawks, and the prices given for them,—from the laws enacted for their preservation. Each species of bird seems to have had its rank of patron; and Strutt quotes from the book of St. Alban's (so called from its being printed at St. Alban's) the sort of birds assigned to the different ranks of persons, in the following order:—

- The eagle, the vulture, and the melona, for an emperor.
- The ger-falcon, and the tercel of the ger-falcon for a king.
- The falcon gentle, and the tercel gentle for a prince.
- The falcon of the rock for a duke.
- The falcon peregrine for an earl.
- The bastard for a baron.
- The sacre and the sacret for a knight.
- The lanere and the laneret for an esquire.
- The marlyon for a lady.
- The hobby for a young man.
- The gos-hawk for a yeoman.
- The tercel for a poor man.
- The sparrow-hawk for a priest.
- The musket for a holy-water clerk.
- The nesterel for a knave or a servant.

The prevalence of inclosures has made hawking almost impossible in most parts of England. Latterly, however, the Duke of St. Alban's, hereditary Grand Falconer, has imported hawks from Germany, and has attempted to revive the noble art of falconry. Some of these experiments have been made upon his Grace's estate in Lincolnshire, but with little of the glory of the olden sport.

It may, however, be interesting to know, that Sir John S. Sebright, Bart. has very recently published a pamphlet upon hawking, which details the best method of taking, rearing, and training the hunting

hawks, with all the terms of falconry; including feeding, tiring, &c.; with descriptions of their game, and directions for using them in the pursuit of it.

*Why have the ancient English illuminators uniformly represented King Stephen with a hawk upon his hand?*

Because, by that symbol, it is presumed they intended to signify that Stephen was nobly, though not royally, born. The same reason will hold good respecting the representation of Harold, just mentioned.—*Notes to Strutt.*

*Why was it formerly illegal to take a hawk's nest?*

Because the bird was so highly esteemed by the nobility of England.

In the 11th Henry VII, it was deemed, "That if any person was convicted of taking from the nests, or destroying the eggs of a falcon, a gos-hawk, a laner, or a swan, he should suffer imprisonment for one year and one day, and be liable to a fine at the King's pleasure; one half of which belonged to the Crown, and the other half to the owner of the ground whereon the eggs were found;" and if a man destroyed the same sort of eggs upon his own ground, he was equally subject to the penalty. This act was somewhat ameliorated in the reign of Elizabeth, and the imprisonment reduced to three months; with security for good behaviour for seven years.

*Why was the female usually preferred in hawking?*

Because she is much more courageous than the male.

Some of the falcon tribe, it may be here observed, have been used for hunting hares, deer, &c. Mr. Southey alludes to this sport in *Thalaba*:—

The deer bounds over the plain:

The lagging dogs behind,

Follow from afar!

But, lo! the Falcon o'er head

Hovers with hostile wings,

And buffets him with blinding strokes.

*Why was the slight falcon called one of "the lure"?*

Because, being a long-winged hawk, it was flown, to lure other birds.

*Why was the gos-hawk called one of "the fist"?*

Because it was carried upon the hand, with straps of silk or leather, called jesses, about its legs; the jesses being made sufficiently long for the knots to appear between the little and middle finger of the hand that held them, so that, the small thongs of leather might be fastened to them with two strings; and the thongs were loosely wound round the little finger: lastly, each leg was adorned with a bell, fastened with rings of leather, to which was added, a long thread, by which the bird, in tutoring, was drawn back, after she had been permitted to fly; and this was called reclaiming the hawk. These threads were useful to keep the hawk from winding 'when she bated,' that is, when she fluttered her wings to fly after her game. The person who carried the hawk was also provided with gloves, to prevent the talons from hurting his hand. In the inventories of apparel belonging to Henry VIII, such articles frequently occur. At Hampton-Court, in the Jewel-house, were seven hawks' gloves, embroidered.—*Abridged from Strutt.*

*Why were the bells made at Milan the best for gos-hawks?*

Because, says Strutt, "they were commonly sounded with silver, and charged for accordingly." Strutt adds in a note, "I am told that silver being mixed with the metal, when the bells are cast, adds much to the sweetness of the sound," and hence, probably, the allusion of Shakspeare, when he says,

How silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night.

*Why was a hawk said to be whistled off?*

Because hawks were usually sent off with a whistle, against the wind, when sent in pursuit of prey; with

it, or down the wind, when turned loose, and abandoned. Thus

If I do prove her haggard,  
Though that her jesses were my dear heart strings,  
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,  
To prey at fortune. Othello.

The hawk was called back to the hand by the same signal:

If you can whistle her  
To come to fist, make trial, play the young falconer. *Old Play.*

Sir Thomas Browne has written a Tract "Of Hawks and Falconry, Ancient and Modern," in which he illustrates the economy of the birds with great minuteness. He says, "They carried their hawks in the left hand, and let them fly from the right. They used a bell, and took great care that their jesses should not be red, lest eagles should flie at them." The ancient recreation "seemed more solemn and sober than ours at present, so improperly attended with oaths and imprecations. For they called on God at their setting out."—*Folio edit.* 1686.

*Why was it believed by the old naturalists that hawks and other birds of prey did not drink?*

Because all birds of prey are capable of sustaining the want of food and water for *long periods*, particularly the latter; but of which they also seem remarkably fond, drinking frequently in a state of nature, and during summer washing almost daily: the error must, therefore, have arisen from imperfect observation of their habits. Sir Thomas Browne, who quotes Aristotle in this error, says, "although it will not strictly hold, yet I kept an eagle two years, which fed upon cats, kittlings, whelps, and ratts, without one drop of water."

*Why is the Mews, at Charring Cross, so called?*

Because it was originally the *mew*, which, in the falconer's language, signifies a place wherein the hawks were put at the moulting (or mewing) time,



when they cast their feathers. The King's hawks were kept at this place as early as the year 1377, an. 1, Richard II, but in 1537, the 27th year of Henry VIII, it was converted into stables for that monarch's use, and the hawks were removed.

The word *mew* is also used metaphorically for any close place. Spenser has

Forth coming from her darksome *mew*,  
Where she all day did hide her hated hew.

*Fairy Queen.*

Hence also, to mew, or keep shut up :

More pity that the eagle should be *mew'd*,  
While kites and buzzards prey at liberty.—*Richard III.*

*Why was a seller of hawks called a cadger?*

Because the round frame of wood on which they carried their birds formerly was called a *cadge*. *Cadger* is also given as meaning a huckster, from which the familiar term *codger* is more likely to be formed than from any foreign origin.—*Nares.*

*Why is an itinerant dealer called a hawk?*

Because, perhaps it originally signified one who carried about hawks for sale, though obsolete in that sense by the disuse of the thing —*Nares.*

Johnson derives it from *hoch*, a German word for a salesman,

*Why do we use the proverb, between hawk and buzzard?*

Because it originally meant between two dangerous enemies, a hawk and a kite. It is now chiefly used to express mere doubt. The hawk is teachable, the buzzard is not; whence the French put them together in a proverb:—"you cannot make a hawk of a buzzard."—*Nares.*

*Why was the stalking-horse used in fowling?*

Because it was originally a horse trained for the purpose, and covered with trappings, so as to conceal the sportsman from the game he intended to shoot at. It enabled the archer to approach the birds unseen by them, so near, that his arrows might easily reach them;

but as this method was frequently inconvenient, and often impracticable, the fowler had recourse to art, and caused a canvass figure to be stuffed, and painted like a horse grazing, but sufficiently light to be moved with one hand. These deceptions were made in the form of oxen, cows, stags, &c.

## HORSE-RACING.

*Why is it concluded that horse-racing was known and practised by the Anglo-Saxons?*

Because, when Hugh, the head of the house of the Capets, afterwards monarchs of France, solicited the hand of Edelswitha, the sister of Athelstan, he sent to that prince, among other valuable presents, several *running horses*, with their saddles and their bridles, the latter embellished with bits of yellow gold.—*Strutt*.

*Why were horses formerly run in West Smithfield?*

Because they were usually exposed there for sale so early as the time of Henry II; when, to prove their good qualities, they were matched against each other. This is said to be the earliest record of horse-racing in England; and is thus described by Fitzstephen:—"When a race is to be run, (by valuable hackneys, and charging studs) and perhaps by others, which also in their kind are strong and fleet, a shout is immediately raised, and the common horses are ordered to withdraw. Three jockeys, or sometimes only two, as the match is made, prepare themselves for the contest. The horses, on their part, are not without emulation, they tremble, are impatient, and are continually in motion; at last, the signal once given, they strike, devour the course, hurrying along with unremitting velocity. The jockeys, inspired with the thoughts of applause, and the hopes of victory, clap spurs to their willing horses, brandish their whips, and cheer them with their cries."

Moryson, in his facetious *Itinerary*, 1617, records a strange prejudice, which in some measure, exists to this day: "The Londiners pronounce woe to him that

*Why, at Newmarket, are there at the winning-post and distance post, two men holding crimson flags?*

Because, as soon as the first horse has passed the winning-post, the man may drop his flag; and the other at the distance-post may drop his at the same moment, and the horse which has not then passed that post is said to be *distanced*, and cannot start again for the same plate or prize. A *distance* is 240 yards from the winning-post.

*Why is a feather-weight so called?*

Because it is the lightest weight that can be put upon the back of a horse.

*Why is a give-and-take plate so called?*

Because the horses carry weight according to their height. Fourteen hands are taken as the standard height, and the horse must carry nine stone, the horse-man's stone being 14lb. Seven pounds are taken from the weight for every inch below fourteen hands, and seven pounds added for every inch above fourteen hands. A few pounds additional weight is so serious an evil, that it is said, seven pounds in a mile-race are equivalent to a distance.

*Why is a post-match so called?*

Because the parties possess the privilege of bringing any horse of a certain age to the post.

*Why is a produce match so called?*

Because it is between the produce of certain mares in foal at the time of the match, and to be decided when they arrive at a specified age.

*Why was the horse Eclipse so named?*

Because he distanced all horses with whom he ran; or in other words, they had no place. Of his speed no correct estimate can be formed; for he never met with an opponent sufficiently fleet to put it to the test.

Eclipse produced 334 winners, and these netted to their owners more than one hundred and sixty thousand pounds; exclusive of plates and cups. This

fine animal died in 1789, at the age of twenty-five years.

Childers, another famous race horse, moved eighty-two feet and a half, in a second of time; or, nearly *a mile a minute*: he ran round a course at Newmarket, (about four miles) in six minutes and forty seconds. Racers usually run the four-mile Newmarket course in about seven minutes and three-quarters, or eight minutes, or twenty-four feet at each stretch.

*Why was the cheating game of pricking at the belt first introduced at races?*

Because of its origin among gypsies, who frequent races in great numbers. Mr. Brand says, "it appears to have been a game much practised by the gypsies in the time of Shakspeare. For the information, if not for the benefit, of the unwary, its description is as follows: a leathern belt is made up into a number of intricate folds, and placed edgewise upon a table. One of the folds is made to resemble the middle of the girdle; so that whoever shall thrust a skewer into it, would think he held it fast to the table; whereas, when he has so done, the person with whom he plays, may take hold of both ends, and draw it away. The game is, however, often played with list, instead of a leathern belt, whence it is called *pricking at the garter*; and adepts in the game have been facetiously termed "knights of the garter." Mr. Brand also calls it "fast and loose."

*Why were the Game-Laws first established?*

Because of the oppressive rule of William the Conqueror; who not only seized on all the forests, but pretended an absolute right to them. Thus, he confined all hunting and fowling in them to himself, or such as he should permit or appoint. He punished, with the loss of his eyes, any that were convicted of killing the wild boar, the stag, or roe-buck. In the reigns of

William Rufus, and Henry I, it was less criminal to murder a man than to kill a beast of the chase.

#### ARCHERY.

*Why is shooting with a bow and arrow called archery?*

Because the bow, when drawn, is in the shape of an arch.

*Why is it inferred, that the bow was the most ancient and most common of all weapons?*

Because Ishmael, we are told, became a wanderer in the desert, and an archer: so were the heroes of Homer; and the warriors of every age and country have been acquainted with the use of similar arms.

Strutt has copied from a Saxon manuscript, representations of Esau, going to sell venison for his father; and Ishmael, after his expulsion from the house of Abraham, and residing in the desert.

*Why were the English formerly expert in archery?*

Because, as far back as the thirteenth century, every person not having a greater annual revenue in land than one hundred pence, was compelled to have in his possession, a bow and arrow, &c.; and all such as had no possessions, but could afford to purchase arms, were commanded to have a bow with *sharp* arrows, if they dwelt without the royal forests, and a bow with *round-headed* arrows, if they resided within the forests, to prevent the owners from killing the king's deer.

His skill in the use of the long bow was the proud distinction of the English yeoman, and it was his boast that none but an Englishman could bend that powerful weapon. Chaucer describes his archer, as carrying "a mighty bow;" and the "cloth-yard shaft," which was discharged from this engine, is often mentioned by our old poets and chroniclers. The command of Richard III, at Bosworth, was this:

"Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head."

To the use of the bow as a warlike weapon, we need here refer but briefly. The bow, too, claims part of the glory of the conquest of England, by William,



Duke of Normandy. The Norman army was fronted by "footmen clothed in light armour, worn over a gilded cassock, and bearing either long-bows, or steel cross-bows;" and the celebrated onset of Taillefer, gave note for the attack by showers of arrows, returned by tremendous cuts of steel axes. Harold, himself, too, had his eye struck by an arrow; notwithstanding which, he continued to fight at the head of his army. The bowmen were also the chief reliance of the English leaders in our bloody battles, for the succession to the Crown of France. At Agincourt, Cressy, Poitiers, and Flodden, it did terrific execution; and many of its effects are graphically described in the sparkling pages of Froissart.

*Why were the English archers so superior to those of other countries?*

Because it seems there was a peculiar art in the English use of the long-bow; for our archers did not employ all their muscular strength in drawing the string with the right hand, but thrust the whole weight of the body into the horns of the bow with the left.

*Why was archery first practised as a holyday pastime?*

Because of a command of Edward III., that the leisure time upon holydays should be spent in recreations with bows and arrows. Richard II., and Edward IV. made similar ordinances: the latter, that "every Englishman, and Irishman dwelling in England, should have a long-bow of his own height, that butts should be set up at every township, at which the inhabitants were to shoot upon all feast days," or be fined one halfpenny for each omission. In the 16th century the use of the long-bow was much neglected. Henry VIII. however, made laws in favour of archery; instituted a chartered society for shooting, and with waggish humour dignified a successful archer, named Barlow, by saluting him as Duke of Shoreditch, at which place the man resided. This dignity was long

preserved by the captain of the London archers; who used to summon the officers of his several divisions by the titles of the Marquises of Barlow, Clerkenwell, Islington, Hoxton, Earl of Pancras, &c. Stow informs us, that before his time, (he died 1605) it was customary for the lord mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, to go into Finsbury Fields, where the citizens were assembled, and shoot at the standard with broad and flight arrows for games. After the reign of Charles I. archery fell into disrepute. Sir William Davenant satirizes the attorneys and proctors shooting in Finsbury Fields. The Artillery Company, or Finsbury archers, revived in 1610, retaining the use of the bow, as well as their place of exercise. About 1753, a society of archers erected targets in Finsbury fields during Easter and Whitsuntide, when the best shooter was styled captain for the ensuing year, and the second lieutenant. About 1789, archery was again revived as a general amusement; and societies of bow-men, or toxophilites, were formed in almost every part of the kingdom. Moreley, in his Essay on Archery, 1792, enumerates twenty of the principal societies then existing. In the present century archery has been occasionally revived, more as a private than a public amusement. About five years since there were companies in the neighbourhood of Taunton: at Harlow, in Essex; Bury, in Suffolk; and at Westminster; and about a month since a society was formed at Newbury in Berkshire.

Archery, as a branch of school amusements, existed at Harrow within the last sixty years. In the original regulations for the endowment of the school, date 1590, the benevolent founder specifies the only amusements allowed at Harrow:—"Driving a top, tossing a handball, running, and shooting." For this latter exercise all parents were required to furnish their children "with bowstrings, shafts, and breasters." In consequence of this regulation it was usual to hold an annual exhibition of archery, on August 4, when the

scholars contended for a silver arrow. Of this sport we have seen an etching, now become somewhat scarce. This custom has been abolished, and in its room has been substituted the delivery of annual orations before the assembled governors.

*Why are the heroes of romance usually praised for their skill in archery?*

Because, in the early ages of chivalry, the usage of the bow was considered as an essential part of the education of a young man who wished to make a figure in life.—*Strutt.*

*Why was the long-bow so called?*

Because it might be distinguished from the arbalist or cross-bow, which was not only much shorter than the former, but fastened also upon a stock, and discharged by means of a catch or trigger, which probably gave rise to the lock on the modern musket.—*Strutt.*

Bayle, explaining the difference between testimony and argument, uses this laconic simile. "Testimony is like the shot of a long-bow, which owes its efficacy to the force of the shooter; argument is like the shot of the cross-bow, equally forcible, whether discharged by a dwarf or a giant."

*Why was the arbalist, or cross-bow, also called a steel-bow?*

Because the horns were usually made with steel.

*Why were cross-bows also called stone-bows?*

Because they were modified to the purpose of discharging of stones.

*Why were cross-bows much less common than long-bows?*

Because of several laws for the prohibition of the former. In the time of Henry VIII. a penalty of ten pounds was inflicted on every one who kept a cross-bow in his house.



*Why was a certain arrow called a bolt?*

Because it had a round or half round bolt at the end of it, with a sharp-pointed arrow head proceeding therefrom. When it had only the blunt bolt, without the point, it was a *bird bolt*. Hence the phrase, *bolt upright*, and the sign of the *bolt-in-tun*, (or tub,) in Fleet-street, London. The bolt thus differed from a shaft, which was sharp or barbed. Hence the proverb, "to make a *bolt*, or a *shaft* of a thing." We have the first also in the proverb, "A fool's *bolt* is soon shot." Nares says, "See also *Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 2, for the exquisite beauty of the passage." Here it is, from one of the most splendid pages of Shakspeare:

(*Oberon to Puck.*)                      I saw (but thou couldst not)  
 Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
 Cupid all arm'd; a certain aim he took,  
 At a fair vestal, throned by the west;  
 And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:  
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
 Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon;  
 And the imperial vot'ress passed on,  
 In maiden meditation, fancy free.  
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell;  
 It fell upon a little western flower,  
 Before milk-white; now purple with love's wound—  
 And maidens call it, love-in-idleness.  
 Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once;  
 The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid,  
 Will make or man or woman madly dote  
 Upon the next live creature that it sees.

*Why was the word "aim" formerly used for applause or encouragement?*

Because, to cry *aim*, in archery, was to encourage the archers by crying out *aim*, when they were about to shoot.

*Why was to "give aim," an office of direction and assistance?*

Because the person chosen stood within a convenient distance of the butts, to inform the archers how near their arrows fell to the mark; whether on one side or the other, beyond or short of it. The terms were, *wide*

on the *bow hand*, or the *shaft hand*, i. e. left and right; *short*, or *gone*, the distance being estimated by bows' lengths. This was, in some measure, a confidential office, but was not always practised.—*Nares*.

Maria gives aim in *Love's Labour Lost*, when she says,—

*Wide o'er the bow-hand! I' faith your hand is out.*

So Venus assists Cupid:

While lovely Venus stands to give the aim,  
Smiling to see her wanton bantling's game.—

*Drayton's Eclogues*, 1420.

*Why was "too much o' the bow-hand" used to denote a failure in any design?*

Because the bow-hand is the left hand, in which the bow was held.

*Why was a certain arrow called a butt-shaft?*

Because it was used for shooting at butts; formed without a barb, so as to stick into the butts, and yet be easily extracted.—*Nares*.

The very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow boy's butt-shaft.

*Romeo and Juliet*.

*Why was an archer said to hit the white?*

Because the centre part of the mark upon the butts was *white*. The whole was painted in concentric circles of different colours, the interior circle being white; and in the centre of the white was a pin of wood, to cleave which with the arrow was the greatest triumph of a marksman. Hence, *to hit the white*, was used to signify, "to be right," "you have hit the mark;" expressions common in old authors, as shooting was in their time a daily practice.

*Why was the yew preferred for bows?*

Because of the compactness, hardness, and elasticity of the wood; and so much of it was required for the above purpose, that ships trading to Venice were obliged to bring ten bow-staves along with every butt of malmsey.

*Why were young archers recommended to shoot in the dark, at lights set up for that purpose?*

Because one great fault which they generally fell into, was the direction of the eye to the end of the arrow, rather than to the mark.

*Why was it necessary for an archer to have several arrows of one flight, plumed with feathers from different wings?*

Because they might suit the diversity of winds.—*Strutt.*

*Why is the term "upshot" so commonly used?*

Because, in archery, it formerly signified the decision, and, though archery is now so much in disuse, the above word, in the sense of the end or conclusion of any business, is still retained.

*Why was the bow, even in Elizabeth's time, thought to be more advantageous than the musket?*

Because the latter was at the period very cumbersome, and unskilful in contrivance, while archery had been carried to the highest perfection. Mr. Grose tells us, that an archer could formerly shoot six arrows in the time necessary to charge and discharge a musket, and even in modern days a practised bowman has been known to shoot twelve arrows in a minute, into a circle not larger than the circumference of a man's hat, at the distance of forty yards.

#### QUOITS AND DUMB-BELLS.

*Why was throwing of heavy weights and stones with the hand much practised in former times?*

Because, as this pastime required great strength and muscular exertion, it was a very proper exercise for military men. Casting of the bar is frequently mentioned by the romance writers as one part of a hero's education, and a poet of the sixteenth century thinks it highly commendable for kings and princes, by way of exercise, to throw "the stone, the barre, or

the plummet." Henry the Eighth, after his accession to the throne, according to Hall and Holinshed, retained "the casting of the barre" among his favourite amusements. The sledge-hammer was also used for the same purpose as the bar and the stone; and, among the rustics, if Barclay be correct, the axle-tree. —*Strutt.*

*Why is the discus of the ancients, improperly called, in England, quoit?*

Because the game of quoits is a game of skill; whereas the discus was only a trial of strength, as among us to throw the hammer.

In Homer's Iliad, (Pope's translation) book xxiii. we find the following:

Then hurl'd the hero, thundering on the ground  
A mass of iron, (an enormous round)  
Whose weight and size the circling Greeks admire,  
Rude from the furnace, and but shap'd by fire.  
Let him whose might can hurl this bowl, arise,  
Who further hurls it, takes it as a prize.

Hence it has been erroneously inferred that the Greeks were acquainted with quoits. The *discus* appears to have been a round flat plate of metal, of considerable magnitude, and very heavy. The *quoit* is of iron also, and perforated in the middle: the latter game may therefore have been derived from the Greeks, but the actual identity of the discus and the quoit cannot be established.

*Why is the quoit, in many places, called a shoe?*

Because formerly, in the country, the rustics not having the round perforated quoits to play with, used horse-shoes.

*Why is ringing of the dumb-bells of considerable antiquity?*

Because we find an author of the sixteenth century advising young men, by way of amusement, to "labour with poises of lead or other metal," which form the modern "bells." Strutt observes, "this notable pas-

time, I apprehend, bore some resemblance to the *Skiomachia*, or fighting with a man's own shadow, mentioned in the *Spectator*, No. 115. 'It consisted,' says the author, 'in brandishing of two sticks grasped in each hand, and loaden with plugs of lead at either end;—this pastime opens the chest, exercises the limbs, and gives a man all the pleasure of boxing without the blows.'"

#### RUNNING.

*Why was foot-racing originally a more honourable pastime than at present?*

Because in the middle ages it was an essential part of a young man's education, especially if he was the son of a man of rank, and brought up to a military profession; whereas, in the present day, foot races seldom happen but for the purpose of betting.

*Why is the game prison bars, or base, believed to be of great antiquity?*

Because of its mention in the proclamations of Edward III, where it is spoken of as a childish amusement, and prohibited to be played in the avenues of the palace at Westminster, during the sessions of parliament, from its interruption of the members, and others, in passing to and fro. It is also spoken of by Shakspeare as a game practised by the boys:

He, with two striplings, lads more like to run  
The country base, than to commit such slaughter,  
Made good the passage.—*Cymbeline*.

The lines following give some idea of the sport:

So ran they all as they had been at base,  
They being chased that did others chase.

*Spenser.*

This game was also played by men, especially in Cheshire, and the adjoining counties. About 1780, a grand match at base was played in the fields behind Montague House, (now the British Museum) by twelve gentlemen of Cheshire against twelve of Derbyshire,



for a considerable sum of money. We need not describe this pastime. Strutt says, "In Essex they play it with the addition of *two prisons*;" and we can add similar testimony of two prisons in the game, as played in Hertfordshire, where it was a favourite recreation of our "careless childhood."

*Why was Barley-break also called "Last in Hell"?*

Because it was played by six people, (three of each sex) who were coupled by lot. A piece of ground was then chosen, and divided into three compartments, of which the middle one was called *hell*. It was the object of the couple condemned to this division to catch the others, who advanced from the two extremities; in which case a change of situation took place, and hell was filled by the couples who were excluded by pre-occupation from the other places; in this *catching*, however, there was some difficulty; as, by the regulations of the game, the middle couple were not to separate before they had succeeded, while the others might break hands whenever they found themselves hard pressed. When all had been taken in twice, the last couple were said to be in *hell*, and the game ended.—*Mr. Gifford, from a passage in Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia.*

The couples being paired, a male and female together, it seems they sometimes solaced themselves in their confinement by kisses, as appears from this epigram:

We two are last in hell: what may we fear  
To be tormented or kept pris'ners here?  
Alas! if kissing be of plagues the worst,  
We wish in hell we had been last and first.

*Herrick's Hesperides.*

The Scottish barley-break differs from ours. Archdeacon Nares thinks our puerile game of *tag* to have been derived from the above; for there was a *tig* or *tag* in the game as played in Yorkshire, where a touch made prisoners.

## SKATING.

*Why is skating so called?*

Because of its origin from the German *skait* or *skate*, to glide along a smooth surface.

Skating was undoubtedly introduced among us from Holland ; but a kind of rude essay towards it was made among ourselves very early, by tying bones upon the feet. Fitzstephen, who wrote in the reign of Henry II, tells us, that " when the great pane or moor (which watereth the walls of the citie on the north side) is frozen, many young men play upon the ice ; some stryding as wide as they may, doe slide swiftly ; some tie bones to their feete, and under their heeles, and shoving themselves by a little picked staffe, doe slide as swiftly as a birde flyeth in the air, or arrow out of a crosse-bow." He describes also contests on the ice between such skaters. Strutt acknowledges that he cannot trace the first introduction of this pastime into England.

Fitzstephen likewise describes another pastime on the ice :—" Others make a seat of ice, as large as a millstone, and having placed one of their companions upon it, they draw him along," &c. This contrivance was superseded by sledges, common upon the Thames in the hard frosts of the last century, as appears in the following couplet from a song upon the great frost of 1716 :

" While the rabble in sledges run giddily round,  
And nought but a circle of folly is found."

The Dutch are allowed to be the first skaters in Europe.\*

Few modern feats upon the ice exceed the following, narrated in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 73 :—" We re-

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\* We have a free pen-and-ink drawing of the frozen Scheldt, with hundreds of male and female skaters. In the centre of the picture is a lady of consequence, seated in a sledge, the body of which is of a carlike shape, with the fore-part of a pawing horse in front. The sledge is drawn by one horse, driven by a man who is placed behind the seat or body of the vehicle.

member, many years ago, two Englishmen fixing iron runners to a Russian sledge; with which, after rigging it with mast and sail, they started upon the Neva, and darted along at the rate of twenty-two miles an hour. Having, in their progress, observed a wolf crossing on the ice, they steered directly towards it; and such was the velocity of the sledge, that it cut the animal in two. They had no doubt that, with a double quantity of canvass, they could have nearly doubled the velocity."

## WRESTLING.

*Why have the inhabitants of Cornwall and Devon been so long celebrated for their expertness in wrestling?*

Because they learned the art at an early period of life, "for you shall hardly find," says Carew, "an assembly of boys in Devon and Cornwall, where the most untowardly among them will not as readily give you a muster (trial) of this exercise as you are prone to require it."—*Survey of Cornwall*. Hence, to give a *Cornish hug*, is a proverbial expression. The Cornish, says Fuller, are masters of wrestling, so that if the Olympian games were now in fashion, they would come away with the victory.

Their *hug* is a cunning close with their fellow combatants, the fruits whereof is his fair fall or foil at the least.—*Worthies of Cornwall*.

We learn from Stow that the citizens of London formerly wrestled on St. Bartholomew's day before the lord mayor and aldermen, who rode out of town on horseback to witness the sport. The Londoners and inhabitants of Westminster also made frequent matches, the reward being usually a ram. Thus, Chaucer says of Sir Mopas,

Of wrastling there was none his pere,  
Where any ram shulde stonde.

Before Chaucer's time, however, a cock seems to have been a frequent prize.



## BOAT-ROWING.

*Why has boat-rowing always been practised among the upper classes of society?*

Because, like the sports already enumerated, it formerly was part of the education of a gentleman. The Saxons thought it by no means derogatory for a nobleman of the highest rank to row or steer a boat with dexterity and judgment. The reader will recollect the popular story of Edgar being rowed on the river Dee by eight kings, while himself, the 9th, sat at the stern of the barge, and held the helm.

*Why were rowing matches first introduced into this country?*

Because of the discontinuance of tilting at the quintain, and justing one against another in boats; since, the pastime, though frequently practised among the Greeks and Romans, does not seem to have been previously attended to in England.

*Why were the theatres, which formerly stood on the banks of the Thames, so beneficial to the watermen?*

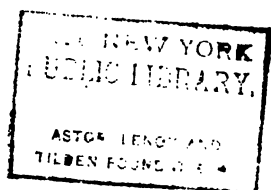
Because it was then the fashion to go to the theatre by water. Taylor, the water poet, tells us, that about the year 1596, 40,000 watermen were thus maintained. The *Globe*, the *Rose*, and the *Swan* theatres were on Bankside; besides which, there were also six other theatres on the Middlesex bank of the Thames. Sir Roger de Coverley's journey to Vauxhall Gardens, by the Thames, was probably the last relic of this aquatic fashion.

## TENNIS, FIVES, &amp;c.

*Why were tennis-courts common in England in the sixteenth century?*

Because tennis play was then taken up by the nobility, and in the covered courts it might be practised without any interruption from the weather. Henry VII. was a tennis-player; in the expenditure of his reign





is an entry:—"Item, for the king's loss at tennis, twelve-pence," &c. Henry VIII, according to Stow, added "divers fair tennis-courts" to Whitehall. James I. speaks of tennis as a princely game. Charles II. had particular dresses in which he played.

*Why is hand-tennis called fives?*

Because it was originally played by five competitors on either side, as the succeeding passage would seem to indicate:—"When Queen Elizabeth was entertained at Elvetham, Hampshire, by the Earl of Hertford, after dinner, about three o'clock, ten of his lordship's servants, all Somersetshire men, in a square greene court before her Majestie's windowe, did hang up lines, squaring out the forme of a tennis-court, and making a cross line in the middle; in this square they played *five to five* with hand-ball, at bord and cord, as they tearne it, to the great liking of her highness."—*Nichols's Prog. Queen Eliz.*

*Why is cricket supposed to be a modern game, and to have originated from the club ball, which nearly resembles goff?*

Because, according to Strutt, the appellation cannot be traced beyond the commencement of the last century, where it occurs in one of D'Urfey's songs:

Her was the prettiest fellow,  
At foot-ball or at cricket;  
At hunting race or nimble race,  
How featly her could prick it.

*Why is trap-ball supposed to be coeval with most of the early games played with the bat and ball?*

Because it can be traced as far back as the fourteenth century. As it was then played, the trap was sufficiently elevated to raise the ball to strike at, without stooping.

Strutt tells us, that boys and the common herd of rustics who cannot procure a trap, content themselves with making a round hole in the ground, and by way of lever use the brisket bone of an ox, or a flat piece

of wood of like size and shape, which is placed in a slanting position, one half in the hole with the bat upon it, and the other half out of it; the elevated end being struck smartly with the bludgeon, occasions the ball to rise to a considerable height, and all the purposes of a trap are thus answered, especially if the ground be hard and dry.

*Why is the game "head or tail" of considerable antiquity?*

Because it is the same as *cross and pile*, played by Edward II. as appears by one of his wardrobe rolls. Anciently the English coins were stamped with a cross on one side. The origin of this game is farther traced to the Greeks, who played it with a shell smeared with pitch on one side, and thus making white and black.

#### CHIVALRIC SPORTS.

*Why did a tournament differ from a just?*

Because the tournament was a conflict with many knights, divided into parties, and engaged at the same time; whereas the just was a trial of skill, when only one man was opposed to another. Again, Mr. Mills says, "the just was a martial exercise; but the tournament was connected with all the circumstances of domestic life."

*Why were tournaments and justs held in the highest esteem?*

Because they were prohibited to all below the rank of an esquire.

*Why was the tournament so called?*

Because it was the practice of the knights to run *par tour*, that is, by turns, at the quintain, and wheeling about successively in a circle to repeat their course; but in process of time they improved upon this pastime, and ran at one another, which certainly bore a much greater similitude to a real engagement.—*Fouchet.*

*Why was the just so called?*

Because of its origin from the Latin, *justa*, and French *jouste*, which some derive from *jocare*, because it was a sort of sportive combat, undertaken for pastime only, and secondary or inferior to the tournament.

*Why were tournaments so frequently held in the middle ages?*

Because the martial spirit of the people was nourished by such customs, for kings were always eager to hold tourneys for the better training up of soldiers to feats of arms. Fame, fortune, and woman's love, were the dazzling rewards of these exercises. Thus, Holinshed, speaking of one of them held in Smithfield, in 1389, says, "And so many a noble course and other martial feats were achieved in those four days, to the great contemplation and pleasure of many a young bachelor desirous to win fame." The objects and tendencies of tournaments are likewise extremely well expressed by Jeffery of Monmouth:—"Many knights famous for their feats were present, with apparel and arms of the same colour and fashion. They formed a species of diversion, in imitation of a fight on horseback; and the ladies being placed on the walls of the castles, darted amorous glances on the combatants. None of these ladies esteemed any knight worthy of her love but such as had given proof of his gallantry in three several encounters. Thus, the valour of the men encouraged chastity in the women, and the attention of the women proved an incentive to the soldier's bravery." It was the general result of tournaments for a vanquished knight to forfeit his armour and horse to his victor.

*Why was the knight who fell from his horse, more dishonoured than he who was disarmed?*

Because good horsemanship was the first quality of a knight. Hence it was thought less dishonourable for a tourneying cavalier to fall with his horse, than to



fall alone. He who carried his lance comelily and firmly was more worthy of praise, although he broke not, than he who misgoverned his horse and broke.—*Mills's History of Chivalry.*

*Why were pointed weapons forbidden at tournaments?*

Because national rivalry, and envy of martial prowess, or of woman's love, often converted tournaments into real battles. This also occasioned an oath to be imposed on all knights, that they would frequent tournaments solely to learn military exercises.

*Why is the ribbon, often drawn from a maiden's bosom, and sent off to reanimate her chosen knight, conjectured to have been blue?*

Because that colour was the emblem of constancy: thus, Chaucer, in his *Court of Love* :—

Lo, yonder folk, quoth she, that kneel in blue,  
They wear the colour, aye, and ever shall,  
In sign they were, and ever will be true,  
Withouten change.

*Why did not heralds, at jousts and battles, cry out "Honour to the brave," instead of "Honour to the sons of the brave?"*

Because no knight could be deemed perfect, until death had removed the possibility of his committing an offence against his knighthood, and thus effacing the merit of all his former deeds.—*Monstrelet.*

*Why was it dishonourable to break a lance traverse, or across the breast of an opponent, without striking him with the point?*

Because, as it could only occur from the horse swerving on one side, it showed unskillful riding.

To "break across," the phrase for bad chivalry, did not die with the lance. It was used by the writers of the Elizabethan age to express any failure of wit or argument. Thus, Celia, in *As you like it*, says of Orlando tauntingly, "O that's a brave man. He writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave

oaths, and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover, as a puny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose."

*Why were justs often called round tables?*

Because, in early time in England, the tournament festivals were held about a round table. Again, a fraternity of knights, who frequently justed with each other, and accustomed themselves to eat together in one apartment, in order to set aside all distinction of rank or quality, seated themselves at a *circular* table, because every place there was equally honourable. Our historians attribute the institution of the round table to Arthur, the son of Uter Pendragon, a celebrated British hero, whose achievements are so disguised with legendary wonders, that it has been doubted if such a person ever existed in reality. In the reign of Edward I, Roger de Mortimer established a round table at Kenilworth, and entertained at his expense 100 knights, and as many ladies. Edward III. next endeavoured to realize the golden imaginations of fable, which had assigned 150 as the complement of Arthur's chivalry, by establishing at Windsor, in 1334, a round table 600 feet in circumference, the weekly expense of maintaining which was one hundred pounds. Philip de Valois, of France, next established a rival table, after which we hear no more concerning the ceremony. The festivals were succeeded by a ball, the knights, in the dance, taking precedence agreeably to their feats of arms in the morning. By the way, the *round-robin* (a circular list in which neither name is first) must have originated in the round table of chivalric times.

In England the round table was succeeded by the order of the Garter, the ceremonial parts of which are retained to this day. See Part III. of the present work, p. 19.



*Why were the guests at festivals placed two by two, and only one plate allotted to each pair?*

Because to eat on the same trencher or plate with any one, was considered the strongest mark of friendship and love.—*Mills*.

*Why was the quintain one of the most favourite exercises of chivalry?*

Because it was particularly calculated to practise the eye and hand in giving a right direction to the lance. A half figure of a man, armed with sword and buckler, was placed on a post, and turned on a pivot, so that if the assailant with his lance hit him not on the middle of the breast, but on the extremities, he made the figure turn round, and strike him an ill-timed blow, much to the merriment of the spectators. The game of quintain was sometimes played by hanging a shield on a staff fixed in the ground, and the skilful squire riding apace struck the shield in such a manner as to detach it from its ligatures.—*Du Cange and Menage*.

Nares believes it was more commonly, in England at least, constructed in the simpler way, as thus described in an old novel: "a quinten is a cross bar turning upon a pole, having a broad board at one end, and a bag full of sand at the other. Now, he that ran at it with his lance, if he hit not the board, (which was probably often painted like a figure,) was laughed at to scorn; and if he hit it full, and rid not the faster, he would have such a blow with the sand-bag on his back, as would sometimes beat him off his horse." *The Essex Champion*, (about) 1690. Fitzstephen also describes the water quintain usually practised on the Thames during the Easter holydays.

The most recent revival of this ancient game was at a grand fête given by Lord Gage, at Firle Place, Sussex, August 3, 1827.

*Why is the game of quintain so called?*

Because it was invented by Quinetus or Quintas,

"but who he was, or when he lived," says Strutt, "is not ascertained. The game itself was a species of mock combat among the Romans, who caused the young military men to practise at it twice a day. From the Romans it descended to the Welch, who spell it *gwyntyn*, literally meaning *vane*. It was a bridal game: thus Ben Jonson says,

At quintin he,  
In honour of his bridal-tee,  
Hath challenged either wide countee.

Dr. Kennet, in his *Parochial Antiquities*, from Dr. Plot, says, that at the village of Blackthorn, through which the Roman road lay, they use it at their weddings to this day, on the common green, with much solemnity and mirth." Dr. Plot also says, "it was set up in the way for young men to ride at, as they carry home the bride; he that breaks the board being counted the best man."

*Why was cutting off a lock of hair one of the preparations for knighthood?*

Because to part with hair was always regarded in the church as a symbol of servitude to God.—*Du Cange*.

To this early custom may we not trace the affectionate interchange of a lock of hair among lovers?

*Why was tilting, or running at the ring so called?*

Because it was to ride at full speed, and thrust the point of the lance through the ring, which was supported in a case or sheath, by two springs, that might be readily drawn out by the force of the stroke, and remain upon the top of the lance. Commeniers, (date 1658) says, "at this day tilting at the quintain is used, when a hoop or ring is struck with a lance;" hence, it is clear that the ring was put in the place of the quintain.—*Strutt*.

We remember seeing at one of the fêtes at St. Cloud, near Paris, a game similar to the above; the players being seated on wooden horses on a large cir-

cular frame turning on a pivot, and resembling an English *round-about*; each player had a foil, with which he strove to seize the greatest number of rings from off a projecting but fixed wire.

*Why is Smithfield so called?*

Because of its corruption from Smethfield, as it were Smoothfield, "plain, (or smooth,) both in name and situation." Here were formerly held many justs and tournaments.

*Why were the tournaments in the days of Henry VIII. more splendid than those of any previous period?*

Because they were no longer simple representations of chivalry, but superb pageants were united to them. But Henry VIII. observes Mills, had none of the virtues of a true knight, and his conduct to his wives was anything but chivalric. Warton pleasantly observes, that had Henry never murdered his wives, his politeness to the fair sex would remain unimpeached.

*Why was the space between Guisnes and Ardres, near Calais, called the Field of the Cloth of Gold?*

Because of the splendid tournament held there between Henry VIII. and Francis I. and the immense quantity of cloth of gold consumed in making pavilions, &c.

*Why is it erroneous to attribute the discontinuance of tournaments to the increased civilisation of the age?*

Because tournaments increased in number as the world became more civilized. There were more tournaments in the fourteenth than in the thirteenth century, and even so late as the reign of Henry VIII. the whole of England seems to have been parcelled out into tilting-grounds.—*Note to Mills's Hist. Chivalry.*

*Why were the young nobility of England soon perfect in chivalric exercises?*

Because boys were sent to school to learn to read at four years of age. At six they were taught languages and the first principles of manners: from ten

to twelve dancing and music were added to their accomplishments, and politeness was particularly encouraged. At fourteen they were initiated into the sports of the field, which prepared them for the ruder exercise of arms. At sixteen they were taught to just, to fight at the barriers, to manage the war-horse, to assail castles, to support the weight of armour, and to contend in feats of arms with their companions. And here their education terminated.—*From a passage in Hardyng's Chronicle.*

## THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES.

*Why were the actors of Greece and Rome called servants of Bacchus?*

Because the dithyrambics, or songs in honour of Bacchus, first gave rise to the pomp and illusions of the theatre. At Athens are still seen the remains of the Temple of Bacchus, which was the first theatre in the world, and a masterpiece of architecture.

*Why are actors sometimes termed Thespians?*

Because one of the earliest was named Thespis, who, in a wagon at Athens, first acted tragedy, 535 years before Christ. In his time tragedy was carried on by a set of musicians and dancers, who introduced an actor between every two songs. The actors' discourse was called the Episode, and, being successful, Æschylus introduced two actors, and Sophocles added a third, which brought tragedy into its full perfection.

The first comedy was also acted at Athens, on a scaffold, by Saffarian and Dolon, 562 years before Christ. Thus, comedy being of earlier origin than tragedy, it is more proper to say comedy and tragedy, than tragedy and comedy.

Dryden has some fine lines on this subject:

At first, the tragedy was void of art;  
A song, where each man danc'd and sung his part,  
And of god Bacchus roaring out the praise,  
Sought a good vintage for their jolly days:



Then wine and joy were seen in each man's eyes,  
 And a fat goat was the best singer's prize.  
*Thespis*, at first, when all besmear'd with lee,  
 Began this pleasure for posterity ;  
 And with his carted actors and a song,  
 Amus'd the people as he pass'd along.  
 Next *Æschylus* the different persons plac'd,  
 And with a better mask his players grac'd ;  
 Upon a theatre his verse express'd,  
 And show'd his hero with a buskin dress'd.  
 Then *Sophocles*, the genius of his age,  
 Increas'd the pomp and beauty of the stage,  
 Engag'd the chorus song in ev'ry part,  
 And polish'd rugged vice by rules of art.

In mythology, Comedy is represented leaning on a column, holding a mask in her right hand, by which she is distinguished from her sisters, as also by a shepherd's crook. Her dress appears shorter, and not so ornamented as that of the other Muses. Melpomene, the presiding muse of tragedy, is generally represented as a young woman with a serious countenance. Her garments are splendid ; she wears a buskin, and holds a dagger in one hand, and in the other a sceptre and crown.

*Why were the Athenian theatres built without a roof?*

Because roofs would have obstructed the free communication of the air ; and in their theatres the Greeks considered not only the manners of the people, but also their health.

In these theatres the spectators were, of course, exposed to the weather ; but, as at Athens the plays were always represented in the day time, the inconvenience was less. The Athenians came usually with great cloaks, to secure them from the rain or the cold ; and for defence against the sun, they had the *sciadion*, a kind of parasol ; but when a sudden squall arose, the play was interrupted, and the spectators dispersed.

*Why were the ancient English plays called miracles?*

Because they consisted of sacred plays, or representations of miracles wrought by the holy confessors, and the sufferings of the martyrs.—*Fitzstephen*.

*Why were these dramatic pieces in later times called mysteries?*

Because, as Dr. Percy supposes, the most mysterious subjects of Scripture were frequently chosen for their composition.

*Why were the pieces which succeeded mysteries called moralities?*

Because they were allegories, in which the characters personified certain virtues and vices. A curious copy of one of these moralities has been preserved, the first leaf of which contains the colour of the dresses, &c.

*Why were inns formerly built with galleries or corridors round their court-yards?*

Because, when miracles, mysteries, and moralities gave way to regular dramatic entertainments, the latter were of course not allowed to be performed in churches; hence they were represented in the yards of inns, in which, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the comedians erected an occasional stage. The spectators viewed the performances from these galleries or corridors.

Many inns so built may yet be seen in the city of London and the Borough; and some slight remains of them exist at Cambridge, where, in one inn-yard, there are remains, on one side, of two tiers of railed galleries, of one tier at the opposite side, and one tier at the end; the stage, it is presumed, was on the fourth side.

*Why was the pit of our theatres originally called the cockpit?*

Because cockfighting was its original appropriation:

Let but Beatrice

And Benedict be seen: Lo! in a trice,

The cockpit, galleries, boxes, all are full.—*Old Play.*

Shakspeare thus mentions the Globe Theatre at Bankside, in the play of Henry V:

Can this vast cockpit hold

The field of vasty France? or can we cram

Into this *wooden O*, the very casques

That did affright the air at Agincourt.

Another of our old theatres, the Phoenix, in Drury-lane, was also called the Cockpit, and the name is preserved to this day in Cockpit alley, opposite the present Drury Lane Theatre.

*Why were clowns and fools first introduced on the stage?*

Because of their origin from *devil* in the mystery, whose province it was to make the spectators merry, and to relieve the serious cast of the discourses. Thence it descended to *vice* or *iniquity* of the morality, who usually personified some bad quality incident to human nature, as pride, or lust, or any other evil propensity; and clowns and fools in regular tragedies and comedies are the descendants of this facetious iniquity. The great master of human nature, in compliance with the false taste of the age in which he lived, has admitted this motley character into the most serious part of one of his best tragedies.—*Strutt*.

Nares says, "Where Justice Overdo personates as fool, in the play of Bartholomew Fair, in order to spy out the proceedings of the place, he says, he wishes to be taken for 'something between a fool and a madman.' This is literally the character; a fellow who, pretending folly, has still the audacity of a madman." The dress is alluded to here:

Or, to see a fellow  
In a long motley cloak guarded with yellow.  
*Prologue to King Henry VIII.*

And by Jacques, in *As you like it*, when he repeats that "motley's the only wear," &c.

The fool was usually a part of great license and facility to the actor, who was allowed almost to fabricate his own part. See Hamlet's directions to restrain this abuse. The fool was always to be merry:

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,  
A stage, where every one must play his part,  
And mine a sad one.  
*Gra.* Let me play the fool:  
With mirth and laughter, let old wrinkles come.

*Merchant of Venice.*

Hence, the phrase of playing the fool seems to have arisen.

*Why is a conceited person called a coxcomb?*

Because of his resemblance to the fool in the early drama, who was dressed in motley clothes, and wore a cap, surmounted with the neck and head of a cock, or sometimes only the crest, or *comb*.

*Why is a merry-andrew so called?*

Because of its origin among the Druids, *an Drieu*, i. e. Arch-Druid; or, from the celebrated Andrew Borde, the writer and empiric.

*Why were certain fools called Court Fools?*

Because they continued an appurtenance to the English court to a very late period. The accounts (says Mr. Douce) of the household expenses of our sovereigns, contain many payments and rewards to fools, both foreign and native, the motives for which do not appear, but perhaps might have been some witty speech or comic action that had pleased the donors. Dr. Fuller says, that the court jester "is an office which none but he that hath wit can perform, and none but he that wants it will perform." Muckle John, the fool of Charles I. and the successor of Archee Armstrong, is perhaps the last regular personage of the kind. The practice was not, however, abolished; for we have an epitaph written by Dean Swift, on Dicky Pearce, the Earl of Suffolk's fool, who was buried in Berkley churchyard, June 18, 1728. This person was an idiot. Lord Chancellor Talbot kept a Welsh jester, named Rees Pengelding. Another Welshman, called Will the Taborer, was retained in a similar capacity, about the beginning of the last century, by Sir Edward Stradling, of St. Donat's Castle, Glamorganshire. Lord Bussy Mansel, of Margam, had likewise in his service one Robin Rush, an idiot by nature, but who often said very witty things. There were people not long since alive in Wales, who well remembered him.



The Lord Mayor's Fool was a distinguished character of this class; and there was a curious feat which he was bound by his office to perform, in celebration of Lord Mayor's Day. He was to leap, clothes and all, into a large bowl of custard. This is alluded to here :

He may, perchance, in tail of a sheriff's dinner,  
Skip with a rime o' the table, from new nothing,  
And take his almain leap into a custard,  
Shall make my lady mayoress and her sisters  
Laugh all their hods over their shoulders.—*Ben Jonson.*

Although the City kept their fool, he did not improve their corporate wisdom; for they have been the sport of satire ever since the time of Charles II.

*Why were certain actors first "Her Majesty's Servants"?*

Because, at the time that it was customary for persons of rank to have private companies of actors, Queen Elizabeth, at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, established, on handsome salaries, twelve of the principal players, under the name of "*Her Majesty's comedians and servants*;" and in the same year there is a record of the Queen granting an annuity of £20. to a Mr. Preston, who performed before her Majesty at Cambridge. Killigrew, after the Restoration, collected together a few of the old actors at the Cock-pit, or Drury-lane Theatre, who were honoured with the title of "*His Majesty's Servants*;" wherefore the company of that theatre is to this day exclusively styled "*Their Majesties' Servants*."

*Why are performances of sacred music called Oratorios?*

Because they commenced with the fathers of the oratory; when, to draw youths to church, they had hymns and sacred stories, written in dialogue, and set to music. After the first part came the sermon, which the people were induced to stay and hear, to be present at the performance of the second part. The subjects, in early times, were the Good Samaritan, Prodigal

Son, Tobit's Story, &c. ; and by the excellence of the composition, the band of instruments, and the performance, the Oratory came into great repute ; and this species of musical drama obtained the general appellation of *Oratorio*.—*Dr. Burney*.

*Why were masquerades originally unpopular in England?*

Because they were first introduced here by the queen of Charles I, on a Sunday, when the populace loudly complained of such a profanation of the sabbath ; and a riot ensuing in front of the banqueting house, Whitehall, between some soldiers and the people, half a dozen of the latter, and two or three guards were killed. Hence, opposition to masquerades was very general for nearly a century.

*Why have actors been, by illiberal persons, called vagrants?*

Because they are so described in the Act of Parliament 17 Geo. II, c. 5. This act has, however, expired, and thanks to the improved intelligence of the age, players are not enumerated in the new Vagrant Act, 5 Geo. IV, c. 83.

*Why does the licensing of plays appear to be of very ancient date?*

Because, so far back as the year 1589, "Commissioners were appointed for reviewing the works of dramatists, to allow the fit and reject the unbecoming." Sir Robert Walpole's Licensing Act was passed chiefly through a libellous, political farce, which Giffard, a manager, sent to that minister ; but theatres and plays had been subject to the control of a licensing power, under the Master of the Revels, or Lord Chamberlain, from before the time of Elizabeth at least. The licensing officer granted or prohibited, as he pleased, license for theatre or play ; and from such plays as he licensed, he expunged every passage which appeared to him objectionable. His fee for a play had origin-

ally been a mark, but, in 1630, it was £2. It is now £2. 2s.—*Hist. Theatres*, 4to. 1824.

*Why is Opera one of the most perfect of entertainments?*

Because it is a dramatical, lyrical, and scenic representation, in which agreeable sensations are conveyed by the combined effect of all the *fine arts*—the poetry and action being addressed to the mind, the music to the ear, and the scenic decorations to the eye of the spectator.—*Rousseau*.

*Why was the pantomime of the ancients superior to that of our times?*

Because it was a perfect species of mimetic or imitative dance, united with vocal and instrumental music, in the chorusses of the tragic, comic, and satiric dramas; and being employed in the service of religion, it thereby acquired a dignity which in modern times it never possessed. Plato and Xenophon, in the person of their master, Socrates, speak favourably of this entertainment; and Aristotle expressly ranks it with the art of poetry. Plutarch eulogized it; and Lucian prefers the orchestral to the speaking dramas. "The Greeks," says Athenæus, "had brought their dance to such perfection in the art of imitating the passions, that the most eminent sculptors thought their time not ill employed in studying and designing the attitudes of the public dancers; and to this study," he adds, "they owed, undoubtedly, some of the most transcendent beauties of their works." At Rome, under Augustus Cæsar, the great heroes of pantomime were Pylades and Bathyllus; so distinct were the styles of these two dancers, that, according to Seneca, neither Pylades in comedy, nor Bathyllus in tragedy, could be reckoned comparable to themselves.

*Why, in the accounts of these performances, is not the expression and action of the countenance mentioned?*

Because the performers wore masks, which the vast

extent of the ancient theatres made expedient rather than offensive. In all these dances, likewise, the motions of the hands and gestures of the body were no less essential than the pulsations of the feet.

It is uncertain whether the Egyptians understood theatrical entertainments; but remains of their monuments prove them to have been accustomed to conceal their faces with masks, which were originally made of bark of trees, then of leather, subsequently of wood, and of paper varnished. At what period the black silk vizor came into fashion, we know not; but masks of black velvet were commonly worn in France in the time of Louis XIV. Female masks were worn by boys, who formerly played women's parts on our stage.

*Why, in modern pantomime, is the harlequin so called?*

Because, in the time of Henry III, of France, a young Italian actor being received by the president Achilles de Harlai, at Paris, his brother actors called him *Harlequin*. Another derives it from a knight named Harlequin, in the wars of Charles Martel against the Saracens. The present character of harlequin, as he appears in England, differs from the ancient mimes and harlequins of other nations. The French harlequin bears a wand, and the usual costume; but he does not use the former. Among the Italians, their harlequin is a complete buffoon, who cracks his jokes to amuse the populace, and ranks with punch, monkeys, and puppets; but in England he is a silent, mysterious, and magical being.

In Venice was formerly an inimitable actor, and *speaking* harlequin, named Sacchi, who performed in a comedy called *The Thirty-two Misfortunes of Harlequin*, when upwards of 70 years of age. The Venetians have likewise favourite pieces called *Four Masques*; *Pantaloön*, a rich old merchant; an old *Dottore*, or cunning Bologna lawyer; *Harlequin* and *Brigella*, servants; all of which nearly correspond with our pantomime characters.



Lord Byron, in his notes to *Childe Harold*, says, Pantaloon is from *Plant the Lion*, that is, the Lion of St. Mark, the standard of the Venetian republic, Thus, Piantaleone, Pantaleon, Pantaloon.

*Why was the clown introduced into our pantomimes?*

Because of his origin from the rural jester. The fool was indeed the inmate of every opulent house, but the rural jester, or clown, seems to have been peculiar to the country families. Douce says, "the term *clown* and *fool* were used, though improperly, perhaps, by our old dramatists."

*Why is it supposed that moveable scenes were not in use till after the year 1605?*

Because three plays then performed at Oxford, before James I, are thus described by a contemporary writer:—"The stage was built at the upper end of the hall, as it seemed at the first sight; but, indeed, it was but a false wall, faire painted, and adorned with stately pillars; which pillars would *turn about*; by reason whereof, with other *painted clothes*, the stage did vary three times in one tragedy." It is observable, that the writer was not acquainted with the word scene, but employed *painted clothes* in that sense. In the early part of Shakspeare's time the want of scenery was supplied by writing the names of the different places of action on boards, which were placed so as to be visible to the audience. Davenant, in the Introduction to the *Siege of Rhodes*, 1656, says, "In the middle of the frieze was a compartment, wherein was *written Rhodes*." The scenery of 1605, above mentioned, was contrived by Inigo Jones; and in 1675, Davenant produced an opera at Dorset Gardens, with "expensive scenery."

*Why are theatrical scenes liable to pay a heavy duty?*

Because, the Barons of Exchequer have decided them to be painted canvass, precisely the same as floorcloth.—*Edinb. Review*.

*Why are scenes painted chiefly in water colours?*

Because they present no glossy surface, and are to be subjected to a strong artificial light.

*Why should the actor remain as little as he can at the back part of the scene?*

Because the perspective will otherwise be often violated: thus, all those objects placed there, which, whilst the performer kept in front (where every thing is suited to his actual size) appeared in due proportion, lose their verisimilitude, and appear insignificant and disproportioned. The man becomes as tall as the rock or tree, and the imagination of the spectator has not power sufficient to preserve the illusion.

*Why were soldiers first stationed at the theatres Royal?*

Because of a riot between Quin and a party of drunken noblemen, at Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, in the reign of George II.: and, to prevent the recurrence of which outrage, his Majesty ordered that the guards should in future do duty every play night.

*Why are large placards called posting bills?*

Because plays were originally announced by large bills pasted on posts at the corners of streets. Taylor, the water poet, alludes to this custom:—"Master Nat. Field, the player, riding up Fleet-street at a great pace, a gentleman called him, and asked him what play was played that day. He, being angry to be staid on so frivolous a demand, answered, that he might see what play was played on every poste. 'I cry your mercy,' said the gentleman, 'I took you for a poste, you rode so fast.'"

*Why is "Vivant Rex et Regina" affixed to the bills of the present day?*

Because of its adoption on the opening of Drury-Lane, in 1663, when likewise the actors' names were, for the first time, affixed to the characters they represented. Printing in black and red lines, alternately, was adopted in Cibber's time.

*Why is our stage sometimes covered with green cloth?*

Because, either of its origin from the stage being formerly strewed with rushes, the usual covering of floors in Shakespeare's time, or, from the custom of hanging the stage with black, when tragedies were performed :

Look, comedie, I mark'd it not till now,  
The stage is hung with black, and I perceive  
The auditors prepar'd for tragédie.

*Induction, or Prologue, 1599.*

Goldsmith humourously calls this "spreading the cloth for bloody work."

*Why are dramatic entertainments natural to man?*

Because all children delight in mimicking action; many of their amusements consist in such performances, and are in every sense *plays*. When they are not engaged with their hoops, tops, and balls, or in some artificial game, they amuse themselves in playing at soldiers, in being at school, or in church, in going to market, in receiving company; and they imitate the various employments of life with so much fidelity, that the theatrical critic, who delights in chaste acting, will often find less to censure in his own little servants in the nursery, than in his Majesty's servants in a theatre royal. When they are somewhat older, they dramatise the stories they read: most boys have represented Robin Hood, or one of his merry men, and every one has enacted the part of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday.

In short, because the true enjoyment of life consists in action; and happiness, according to the peripatetic definition, is to be found in energy; it accords, therefore, with the nature and etymology of the drama, which is, in truth, not less natural than agreeable.—*Edinburgh Review.*

*Why were puppets first introduced?*

Because probably of the poverty of the strolling actor, who thus endeavoured to supply the place of his human confederates by automaton figures made of



wood, and moved by wires; and these contrivances, Mr. Strutt thinks, were taken from the automaton of the monkish miracle workers, at the famous rood or crucifix, at Bexley, in Kent, &c. The jack of the clock-house was also an automaton that struck the hours on the bell in their proper rotation, like the figures which, till very recently, were to be seen at St. Dunstan's church, in Fleet-street.

*Why is the puppet, Punch, so called?*

Because of its origin from Pulcinella, or Punchinello, which first came into existence at Acerra, near Naples.

*Why was Punch formerly so celebrated in England?*

Because of his frequent mention by Sir Richard Steele in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, about the year 1711 and 12. Bickerstaff mentions "a thread in one of Punch's chops," which shows a method of performance and a degree of intricacy in the machinery not now known. At present the puppets are played only by putting the hand under the dress, and making the middle finger and thumb serve for the arms, while the fore-finger works the head. The opening and shutting of the mouth is a refinement which does not seem to be practised in Italy.

*Why is Punch taken away by the Devil at the end of the puppet-show?*

Because in the moralities, from which this puppet is taken, the devil usually carried away the iniquity or evil at the conclusion of the drama.—*Strutt*.

*Why did puppet-shows fall into disrepute?*

Because of the revival of pantomimes, in which all the absurdities, except the discourses, are retained, the difference consisting principally in the substitution of living puppets for wooden ones.—*Strutt*. The *Fantoccini* is no more than a well managed and dressed puppet-show, with a fine Italian name

## MINSTRELS.

*Why were minstrels so called?*

Because of their origin from the ancient Saxon gleemen, subsequently called *ministraulx*, a term well known in Normandy some time before. An eminent French antiquary says, that some of the minstrels composed themselves the subjects they sang or related. Strutt adds, it is very certain, that the poet, the songster, and the musician were frequently united in the same person.

Fiddlers and ballad-singers are the last relics of minstrelsy in this country. The name of fiddlers was applied to the minstrels as early as the fourteenth century, and in an ordinance of Cromwell we read "fiddlers or minstrells."

*Why was the king's minstrel so called?*

Because, in the Norman courts, he accompanied his master, and was probably the regulator of the royal sports, and appointed the other minstrels belonging to the household. The title king was dropped in the reign of Edward IV. and that of serjeant substituted. Hence, probably, the claim of the king's serjeant-trumpeter to grant music licenses in London and Westminster.

*Why were jestours, or gestors, so called?*

Because they related the gestes or actions of famous persons, whether fabulous or real, and these stories were both to excite pity and laughter, as we learn from Chaucer :

And jestours that tellen tales  
Both of wepyng and of game.

*Jesters*, in the modern acceptation of the term, were inferior minstrels.

*Why was the juggler so called?*

Because of his origin from the jocolator, or jugglour of the Normans.

The king's juggler was anciently an officer of note

in the royal household book. In the 12th century, the title of *rex jugulatorum*, or king of the jugglers, was conferred on the chief of the company. In the reign of Henry VII, the office of king's juggler was discontinued.

With the minstrel also fell the juggler, the latter being modernly called a hocus pocus, and now dwindled to the conjurors at fairs.

## DANCING.

*Why is rope-dancing believed very ancient?*

Because of its mention by Terence, in the prologue to Hecyra, where he complains of the attention of the public to a rope dancer. Rope-dancing was also among the minstrels' entertainments, and one of its feats was exhibited at the coronation of Edward VI.

The Morris Dance has already been noticed at p. 26, Part III. of the present work.

*Why were female dancers called tumbling-women?*

Because tombesteres, or tombasteres, in Chaucer, is derived from the Saxon word *tombau*, to dance, vault, or tumble. The same poet, in the *Romance of the Rose*, calls them saylowrs, or dancers, from the Latin *salio*, to leap; and *sauteurs*, leapers, in French.

Tumbling was fashionable at the Opera House, in 1709, and is mentioned in one of the *Tatlers* of that year.

*Why is the sword-dance so called?*

Because it is performed by young men, who form their swords into a figure, lay them upon the ground, and dance round them.

*Why is dancing recommended in early education?*

Because it gives a graceful motion to all our limbs, and, above all things, manliness, and a becoming confidence to young children, which cannot be learned too early. Nothing appears to give children so much confidence and behaviour, and so to raise them to the con-

version of those above their years, as dancing.—*Locke's Treatise on Education.*

*Why are all men natural, spontaneous, involuntary dancers?*

Because of the connexion that exists between certain sounds and certain motions of the human body. Even between inanimate objects and certain notes there is a surprising sympathy. The most massive walls, nay, the solid ground itself, will responsively shake and tremble at particular notes in music. This strongly indicates the presence of some universally diffused and exceedingly elastic fluid, which is thrown into vibrations by the concussions of the atmosphere upon it, produced by the motions of the sounding body. If these concussions are so strong, as to make the large quantity of elastic fluid vibrate, that is dispersed through a stone wall, or a considerable portion of the earth, it is no wonder they should have the same effect upon that invisible and exceedingly subtle matter, which pervades and seems to reside in our nerves.—*Encyc. Brit.*

*Why are there various dances among different nations?*

Because (it is conjectured) all the sensations and passions to which we are subject, depend immediately upon the vibrations excited in the nervous fluid above mentioned. One kind of vibration, for instance, excites the passions of anger, pride, &c. which are paramount among warlike nations. The sounds capable of such effects would naturally constitute their martial music, and dances conformable to it would be simultaneously instituted. Other vibrations of the nervous fluid would produce the passions of love, joy, &c. ; and sounds capable of exciting these particular vibrations will immediately be formed into music for dances of another kind.—*Encyc. Brit.*

*Why are barbarous people most addicted to dancing?*

Because they have the strongest passions, and are the most easily affected by sounds.

*Why is dancing believed to have been originally a religious ceremony?*

Because of its frequent mention in the sacred festivals of the Jews. Some commentators are of opinion, that every psalm had a distinct dance appropriated to it. The Egyptians too had their solemn dances.

*Why were military dances practised among the Greeks?*

Because they tended to make the body robust, active, and well disposed for all the exercises of war.

*Why is the ballet of action so called?*

Because in it the performer is both actor and dancer.

*Why do ballets so often fail in characteristic expression, which should be their essence?*

Because the artists or dancers so often sacrifice the beauties of the dance, and give up the graceful *naïveté* of sentiment, to become servile copyists of a certain number of known and hackneyed figures.—*Noverre.*

*Why are speakers unnecessary in a well-composed ballet?*

Because a complete ballet is, if the expression may be allowed, a mute conversation, or a speaking and animated picture, whose language consists of motions, figures, and gestures, unlimited in their number, because there are no bounds to the varieties of expression.—*From Plutarch.*

*Why is a certain kind of dancing called a country-dance?*

Because of its corruption from the French *contredanse*, where a number of persons, placing themselves opposite one another, begin a figure.

Marshal Bassompierre, speaking of his dancing country dances here, in England, in the time of Charles I, writes it expressly *contredanse*.



## BULL AND BEAR BAITING.

*Why were bear-gardens so called?*

Because in them were baited bears, with ban-dogs, the spectators standing on a scaffold.

*Why were ban-dogs so called?*

Because they were bound-dogs, being always kept tied up, on account of, and to increase, their fierceness. These were the dogs formerly kept for baiting bears, and therefore were probably the same as those by which bulls were baited, the true old English bull dogs, than which a dog of greater courage does not exist. From the terrific howling made by such large dogs, they are occasionally introduced in descriptions of night, to heighten the horror of the picture :

The time when scritch-owls cry, and ban-dogs howl,  
When spirits walk, and ghosts break up their graves.

*Shakspeare, Henry VI.*

*Why is bull-baiting erroneously supposed to have been derived from the Moors?*

Because had it been established among the Moors before the invasion of Spain, some remains of it would still be found in Barbary, where, however, it does not appear to be known ; and the stronger probability is, that it has existed among the Spaniards from a much more remote period of antiquity. The large roofless amphitheatre, the dens communicating with the arena, and much of the ceremonial, are all evidently borrowed from the Romans.—*Beckman.*

*Why was bull-baiting first introduced at Stamford?*

Because, about the year 1209, Earl Warrenne, lord of the town, standing upon the walls of the castle, observed two bulls fighting, until the butchers' dogs interfered and pursued one of them through the town ; which sight so pleased his lordship, that he gave the meadow, where the fray began, to the butchers of the town, to be used as a common after the first grass was mown, "on condition that they should find a *mad bull*,

the day six weeks before Christmas-day, for the continuance of that sport *for ever*."

*Why was bull-running practised at Tutbury?*

Because, by custom of the manor, since the year 1374, a bull was annually given by the prior of the Abbey to the minstrels, to be run or hunted, and then baited, for the security of certain privileges to the inhabitants. The late Duke of Devonshire, steward of Tutbury, however, abolished this custom, in 1778, upon the petition of the town's-people.

#### BOWLING.

*Why were bowling-alleys formerly common in England?*

Because open greens for bowling were inconvenient; and the alleys, being covered over, might be used in all weather, wherefore they were usually annexed to the residences of the opulent. The little room required for these bowling-alleys, was no small cause of their multiplication, particularly in great towns and cities.—*Strutt*.

Hence, also, the origin of long bowling.

#### BILLIARDS.

*Why were billiards introduced?*

Because of their origin from an ancient pastime resembling bowling; but the bowls, instead of being cast by the hand, were driven with a battoon, or mace, through an arch, towards a mark at a distance from it. "Hence," says *Strutt*, "I make no doubt, originated the game of billiards, which formerly was played with a similar kind of arch, and a mark called the king, but played upon a table instead of the ground."

*Why was the table added to this game?*

Because it precluded the necessity for the player to kneel, or stoop exceedingly when he struck the bowl, and accommodated the game to the limits of a chamber.

M. Mingaud has, in a treatise, illustrated, by a se-



ries of plates, the possibility of effecting certain strokes at billiards, which a novice would pronounce impracticable. His plates have all the beauty of mathematical accuracy, and they have recently been published, with a translation of his directions, by Mr. Thurston, the celebrated billiard-table maker, of the Strand. From this treatise we learn, that "the first billiard-table known in France was of a triangular form, and was introduced at the château de Blois, during the residence of Henry III." The game is nowhere more common than in France, where maces and balls on the door-posts of *cafés*, denoting that billiards may be played there, are as often seen, as chequers formerly were at the entrance to public houses in England. Strutt and M. Mingaud differ in their opinion of the origin of billiards, the latter attributing it exclusively to the French. Shovel-board is also thought to have given rise to billiards, especially as, in former times, shovel-board tables were common in the great halls of the opulent.

#### SKITTLES.

*Why are skittles so called?*

Because they originated from trayles, cales, and keiles, from the French *quilles*, or pins. The trayle-pins were afterwards kettle or kittle-pins, subsequently corrupted to skittle-pins. Kittle-pins were sometimes played with bones, whence, in an old drama, (*Merry Milk-Maid of Islington*, 1680) "I'll cleave you from the skull to the twist, and make nine skittles of thy bones."

#### DICE.

*Why is dice-playing supposed to have been one of the most ancient amusements?*

Because it is recorded as one of the earliest pastimes among the Grecians. The ancient Germans, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans, were all greatly addicted to this infatuating amusement. An author of

the twelfth century, too, speaks of ten different games then in use.

"Dice," says Strutt, "are said to have been invented, together with chess, by Palamedes, the son of Nauplius, king of Nubæa. Others, agreeing to the time of the invention of dice, attribute it to a Greek soldier, named Alea; and therefore say, that the game was so denominated. Herodotus attributes both dice and chess to the Lydians, a people of Asia; in which part of the world it is probable they originated, at some very remote but uncertain period.

#### CHESS.

##### *Why is chess so called?*

Because of its origin from the name of the inventor, but to whom this honour is to be attributed has not yet been, nor probably ever will be, settled. We can only quote a few of the traditions on the subject. One has maintained that it originated from *Ascoches*, famous robbers among the Turks. Father Surmond seems to give some countenance to this opinion, when he asserts that its name is derived from the German *scache*, which signifies theft. Fabricius is of opinion, that the name is derived from the Hebrew *schach*, which signifies to draw lines of circumvallation, or to fortify. Fabricius says, that it was invented by one Schatrensca, a celebrated Persian astronomer, who gave it his own name, which it still bears in Persia. Nicot derives it from *schegue*, or *xeque*, a Moorish word, which signifies lord, king, and prince. Bochart judiciously observes, that *schach* is originally a Persian term, and that *schachsnut* in that language, signifies that the king is dead. The opinion of Nicot and Bochart appears most probable, and has met with no small support from the posthumous works of the learned Hyde, published by Dr. Gregory Sharp, &c.

Another account ascribes the invention of chess to a Brahmin, in the fifth century of the Christian æra, to convince an ambitious prince that the *king*, though

the most considerable of all the *princes*, is both impotent to attack, as well as defend himself against, his enemies, without the assistance of his subjects and soldiers.

The *game* was not long confined to India; it passed into Persia, during the reign of *Cosroes*. The Persians looked upon it as a game to be made use of in all countries, to instruct kings at the same time that it amused them, as the name which they gave it, signifies; *Schertrengi*, or *Schatrack*, the game of the *Shah*, or *King*.

The chess-board, the number of pieces, and the manner of playing, have undergone but little variation. The great changes have been in the names: thus, the rock, or fortress, we have corrupted into a rook; the bishop was with us formerly an archer, while the French denominated it *Atin* and *Fol*, which were perversions of the original Oriental term for the elephant.

The ancient Persian game of chess consisted of the following pieces, which were thus named when they reached Europe:—

1. *Schah*, the King. — 2. *Pherz*, the Vizier, or General.—3. *Phil*, the Elephant.—4. *Aspen Suar*, the Horseman. — 5. *Ruch*, the Dromedary. — 6. *Beydal*, the Soldier.

The French changes were *Schah* into *Roy*, the King; *Pherz*, the Vizier, became *Feriré*, *Fierce*, *Fierge*, *Vierge*, and thence lady or *Queen*. The elephant, *Phil*, was easily altered into *Fol*, or the modern *Fou*. Of the horseman, *Aspen Suar*, they made the cavalier or knight. The dromedary, *Ruch*, was changed into a castle, *tour*, or tower; probably from being confounded with the elephant which is usually represented carrying a castle. The foot-soldiers, *Beydal*, were retained by the name of *Pietons*, or *Pions*, whence our pawns.

Draughts, no doubt, is a modern invention.—*Strutt*.

*Why is chess considered one of the noblest of games?*

Because, in chivalric times, it formed one of the principal amusements of the knight when the season and weather did not permit hawking and hunting. A true knight was a chess-player, and the game was played in every country of chivalry; for as the chivalric states of midland Europe obtained a knowledge of it from the Scandinavians, so the southern states acquired it from the Araos.

“When they had dined, as I you say,  
Lords and ladies went to play;  
Some to tables, and some to chess,  
With other games more and less.

The fondness of our ancestors for the game of chess appears by the frequent mention of the amusement in the ancient romances. Sometimes a lover procured admittance to the place where his mistress was confined, by permitting the jailor to win from him a game at chess. Again, the minstrels in the baronial hall, spread over their subject all the riches of their imagination. They were wont to fancy the enchanted castle of a beautiful fairy, who challenged a noble knight to play with her at chess. Flags of white and black marble formed the chequer, and the pieces consisted of massive statues of gold and silver, which moved at the touch of a magic wand held by the player.—*Mills's History of Chivalry*

#### BACKGAMMON.

*Why is backgammon so called?*

Because of its origin from two Welsh words, signifying “little battle.” Strutt, however, thinks the words are perfectly Saxon, as Bac, or Bœc, and gamen, that is back-game; and so denominated because the performance consists in the players bringing their men *back* from their antagonists’ tables into their own; or because the pieces are sometimes taken up and obliged to go back, that is, re-enter at the table they came from.



## CARDS.

*Why are chess and cards supposed to be from the same source.*

Because, in the early cards, we have the king, knight, and knave; and the numerical cards, or common soldiers. The oriental game of chess has also a king, vizier, and horseman, and its pawns or common soldiers; but the parties at cards are doubled; there are four instead of two of each, which is the only variation. There were only thirty-six cards in the original eastern pack; the more complicated one was, undoubtedly, of later invention. "Perhaps," says Mr. Singer, "the English derived their first knowledge of cards from the crusaders, rather than from their continental neighbours."

*Why is the game of cards especially a species of combat?*

Because four warlike monarchs were chosen for kings; the knaves\* (valets) were symbolical of the vassals of feudal times; the other cards refer to the residue of the people of whom the armies were composed. The queen appears to have been introduced by the gallantry of the French.

*Why are cards supposed to have given rise to the noble art of printing?*

Because, when card playing became a general pastime, the increasing demand for cards suggested the idea of cutting the outlines of the different suites, and stamping them upon the cards, the intermediate spaces between the outlines being filled up with various colours laid on by the hand.

These printing-blocks are traced back to the year 1423, and probably were produced at a much earlier period.—*Strutt.*

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\* Knave formerly signified valet or servant, as appears from Wickliffe's New Testament, kept in the Westminster Library and where we read, "Paul, the knave of Jesus Christ."

*Why were cards once supposed to be of French origin?*

Because the *fleur-de-lis* is to be found in every court-card; but they are likewise found among the ornaments of the Romans at a remote period; on the sceptres and crowns of the emperors of the west, in the middle ages, and on those of the Kings of England before the Norman conquest. The earliest cards, moreover, of which specimens are extant, do not bear this mark of French origin.

*Why were cards supposed to be of Spanish origin?*

Because that language has supplied the names of the cards, and of many of the most ancient games; such as *primero*, and the principal card in the game, *quincola*; *ombre*, and the cards *spadille*, *manille*, *basto*, *punto*, *matador*, *quadrille*, &c. The suit of clubs upon the Spanish cards, is not the trefoil, as with us, but clubs or cudgels, of which we retain the name, though we have lost the figure: the original name is *bastos*. The spades are swords, called in Spain *spadas*; in which instance we retain the name, and some faint resemblance of the figure. These being proofs of adoption, rather than invention, Mr. Singer surmises that the Spaniards derived their knowledge of cards immediately from the Moors.

*Why is the trump-card so called?*

Because of its origin from the *triumfo* of the Italians, and the *triomphe* of the French, from its being an advantageous card. A game of this name was once very common.

*Why are the figured cards called "court-cards"?*

Because of the corruption of *court* from *coat*, or the dress of the figure on the card. In an old play, by Rowley, one says, "I am a *coat-card* indeed;" he is answered, "Then thou must needs be a knave, for thou art neither king nor queen."

*Why was ombre played at three-cornered tables?*

Because the players, three in number, might be un-

interrupted, the game requiring great attention and quiet; whence its name, from *Il Hombre*, (or, the man) "on account of the deep thought and attention it requires, which render it a game worthy the attention of man." Quadrille, another species of ombre, was very popular in England, until whist began to be played upon scientific principles.

*Why is the game of whist so called?*

Because it requires strict silence; thus, *whist!* that is, *be silent*.

*Why is "love," (as "six or nine love") employed at whist.*

Because of its origin from the old Scottish word of *luff*, or hand; so that *six luff* will mean so many in hand, or more than the adversary.

*Why is the nine of diamonds called "the curse of Scotland"?*

Because every ninth monarch of that nation was a bad king; and not, as is generally supposed, because the Duke of Cumberland, the night before the battle of Culloden, accidentally wrote his orders for refusing quarter upon the back of this card.—*Singer*.



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**KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PEOPLE:**

**OR THE**

**PLAIN WHY AND BECAUSE.**

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**PART XI.—CURIOUS CUSTOMS.**



## CURIOUS CUSTOMS.

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### CHRISTENING.

*Why is baptism supposed to have had its origin from the Deluge?*

Because it might commemorate the world having been purged by water. Such is the opinion of Grotius. The Jews practised this ceremony on their proselytes after circumcision, long before the coming of Christ. In the primitive times, the ceremony was performed by immersion, as it is to this day in the Oriental churches, agreeably to the original signification of the word, which means dipping or plunging.

*Why was clinic, or death-bed baptism, formerly common?*

Because it was the doctrine of many of the fathers, that baptism washed away all previous sins, and that there was no atonement for sins committed after baptism. On this account many deferred that sacrament till they were arrived at the last stage of life, and were pretty safe from the danger of sinning any more.

*Why is a certain part of a church called the Baptistery?*

Because it is the place where baptism is administered, and sometimes the vessel in which the water for this ceremony is held. Baptisteries are generally appendages to churches; but the most splendid are in-

sulated buildings. Pisa has a celebrated baptistery, which was begun in 1158, and finished in eight years, by Dioti Salvi, an architect of that city. In the middle of this building is an octagonal basin or font, beautifully sculptured, and large enough for the entire immersion of infants in baptism. It does not appear that any building devoted expressly to baptism was ever erected in Great Britain; but the nearest approach to those of Italy is that of Ely.

*Why is the font so called?*

Because it is the *fons*, (Latin) spring, or fountain, containing the baptismal water. Great Britain can boast of many ancient fons. That of Bridekirk, in Cumberland, is of Danish origin. That singular inscription, which, read backwards or forwards, has the same words, occasionally found on the walls of many baptisteries, occurs also very frequently on ancient fons:

*NIYO ANOMHMATA MH MONAN OFIN.*

This is certainly the happiest instance of that species of composition called *amphisbena*, or fabulous serpents, each having two heads, and able to advance either way.

*Why, in Scotland, were newly-baptized children passed through a flame?*

Because their parents believed they might thus be preserved from the power of evil spirits. The invocation on this occasion was—"Let the flame consume thee now or never." An old Greek custom was for gossips to run round the fire with the infant in their arms.

*Why did the ancient Irish, at baptizing their children, only dip their right arms in the water?*

Because it was thought the child would then give a deeper and incurable blow. Mr. Brand considers this as a proof that the whole body of the child was anciently commonly immersed in the baptismal font.

We read likewise, that the above people were so

given to war, that the mother put the first meat into her male infant's mouth upon the point of her husband's sword, wishing that it might die "no otherwise than in war or by the sword:" and Mr. Pennant informs us, that, in the Highlands, midwives give newly born babes a small spoonful of earth and of whisky, as their first food. Grose tells us of a superstition, that a child who does not cry when sprinkled in baptism, will not live; and that children prematurely wise are not long-lived, that is, rarely reach maturity; a notion which we find quoted by Shakspeare, and put into the mouth of Richard III. (*see Act III. sc. I.*) Herrick, in his *Hesperides*, has the following charms for children:

Bring the holy crust of bread,  
Lay it underneath the head;  
'Tis a certain charm, to keep  
Hags away when children sleep.

Let the superstitious wife  
Near the child's heart lay a knife;  
Point be up, and haft be down;  
(While she gossips in the town)  
This, 'mongst other mystic charms,  
Keeps the sleeping child from harmes.

*Why were children, in Northumberland, when first carried by the nurse to visit a neighbour, presented with an egg, salt, and fine bread?*

Because an egg was a sacred emblem, and a gift well adapted to infancy; and cakes and salt were used in religious rites by the ancients.

Bryant says, "an egg, containing in it the element of life, was thought no improper emblem of the ark, in which were preserved the rudiments of the future world: hence, in the Dionusiaca, and other mysteries, one part of the nocturnal ceremony consisted in the consecration of an egg; by which was signified the world. This seems to have been a favourite symbol among many nations; and the Persians said that one of their deities formed mankind and enclosed them in an egg. In Chelsea churchyard, we remember the

tomb of Sir Hans Sloane, surmounted with the mystic symbols of an egg and serpent, as emblems of his knowledge and skill. The Jews probably adopted the use of cakes and salt in religious rites from the Egyptians: "And if thou bring an oblation of a meat-offering, baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour," &c. *Levit. ii. 4.*—"With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."

*Why are presents made to newly baptized children?*

Because such a custom existed among the Grecians: the fifth day after the child's birth, the neighbours sent in gifts and small tokens.

Baptismal festivals sometimes took place in churches. Strype tells us, that in 1559, at the christening of Sir Thomas Chamberlayne's son, St. Benet's Church, Paul's Wharf, was hung with cloth of arras; and, after the christening, were brought wafers, comfits, and divers banqueting dishes; and Hypocras and Muscadine wine to entertain the guests.

*Why are stunted and idiotical children called changelings?*

Because it was popularly believed that all the fairy children were a little backward of their tongue, and seemingly idiots; and that such children had been changed by the fairies. Mr. Pennant, speaking of the "Fairy Oak" at Whiteford, relates, that a poor cottager, who lived near the oak, had a child who grew uncommonly peevish; the parents attributed this to the fairies, and imagined that it was a changeling. They took the child, put it in a cradle, and left it all night beneath the tree, in hopes that the *tylwydd tag*, or Fairy family, or the Fairy Folk, would restore their own before morning. When morning came, they found the child perfectly quiet, and so went away with it, quite confirmed in their belief.

*Why is a piece of coral, with bells, &c. given to infants to assist them in cutting their teeth?*



Because an ancient superstition considered coral an amulet, or defensative against fascination ; for this we have the authority of Pliny. It was thought too to preserve and fasten the teeth in men. In a Latin work, date 1536, we read of coral : "Wytches tell, that this stone withstondeth lyghtenyng. It putteth of lyghtenyng, whirlewynde, tempeste, and stormes, fro shyppes and houses that it is in." Steevens, in his notes to Shakspeare, says, "there appears to have been an old superstition that coral would change its colour and look pale, when the wearer of it was sick." Plat, in his *Jewel House of Nature and Art*, says, "Coral is good to be hanged about children's necks, as well to rub their gums, as to preserve them from the falling sickness : it hath also some special sympathy with nature, for the best coral, being worn about the neck, will turn pale and wan, if the party that wears it be sick, and comes to its former colour again, as they recover health." In a very rare old work, date 1621, in a dialogue relative to the dress of a child, we read, the "Corall with the small golden chayne."

*Why were plum-cakes given to young children called God's-Kichells?*

Because whenever godfathers and godmothers were asked a blessing by their children, they gave them one of these cakes : it is still proverbial in some countries, "Ask me a blessing, and I will give you a plum-cake." We may here notice a remarkable Latin superstition, that if a child's slice of bread and butter be let fall with the buttered side downwards, it is an unlucky omen ; if with the other side, lucky.

#### MARRIAGE.

*Why were there formerly "seasons for marriage?"*

Because such appear to have been denoted in the almanacks of the year. Thus, in Aubrey's *Gentilism*, a MS. in the Lansdowne Collection, is the following printed advertisement, apparently cut out



of an old almanack:—"Marriage comes in on the thirteenth day of January; and at Septuagesima Sunday it is out again until Low Sunday, at which time it comes in again, and goes not out until Rogation Sunday; thence it is forbidden until Trinity Sunday, from whence it is unforbidden until Advent Sunday; but then it goes out, and comes not in again till the thirteenth day of January next following." Among the Marriage Customs, he says, "When I was a little boy, before the Civil Wars, I have seen the bride and bridegroom kiss over the bride-cakes at the table. It was about the latter end of dinner; and the cakes were layd one upon another, like the picture of the shew-bread in the old Bibles. The bridegroom waited at dinner."

*Why were Cumberland bidden-weddings so called?*

Because the bridegroom, with a few of his friends, rode about the villages for several miles round, *bidding*, or inviting, the neighbours to the wedding, on the appointed day; which was likewise advertised in the county newspapers, with a general invitation to visitants. These invitations generally brought together a great concourse of people, who, after enjoying the amusements of the day, made a contribution for the newly-married couple.

*Why was the Bid-ale, or Bidder-ale, so called?*

Because the Saxon word *biddan* signifies to pray or supplicate, and the *bid-ale* was, when any honest man, decayed in his estate, was set up again by the liberal benevolence and contributions of friends at a feast, to which those friends were bid or invited. It was most used in the West of England, and in some counties called a *Help-Ale*.

There is genuine benevolence in these festive meetings to repair the shattered fortunes of a fallen neighbour: they have fallen into disuse, else why the ill-natured saying, "Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them." In these times, men rather associate in com-

panies for mutual succour, and with the parade of laws; but, much as we admire the virtues which such associations reward, we question whether any Friendly Society ever inculcated so pure a lesson of philanthropy as one of these Bid-ales—these unsophisticated unions of heart and hand—which almost compel one to own, “what the present race have gained in head, they have lost in heart.”

This custom exists in Wales, where the party inviting is called the Bidder. Here they advertise and issue circulars, one of which runs thus:

“June 27, 1827.

“As we intend to enter the matrimonial state on Thursday, the 17th of July next, we are encouraged by our friends to make a bidding on the occasion, the same day, at the *Butcher's Arms*, Carmarthen, when and where the favour of your good and agreeable company is humbly solicited; and whatever donation you may be pleased to confer on us then, will be thankfully received—warmly acknowledged—and cheerfully repaid whenever called for, on a similar occasion,

“By your most obedient servants,

“JOHN JONES,

“MARY EVANS.”

Those who accept the invitation generally form part of the procession to church, and in some parts are preceded by a harper or fiddler.

*Why is bride-cake used at weddings?*

Because of its origin in *confarreation*, or a token of the most firm conjunction between man and wife, with a cake of wheat or barley, from *far*, (Latin) bread or corn. Dr. Moffat tells us, that “the English, when the bride comes from church, are wont to cast wheat upon her head.” Herrick says, speaking to the bride:

While some repeat

Your praise, and bless you, sprinkling you with wheat.

In Yorkshire, the bride-cake is cut into little square pieces, thrown over the bride and bridegroom's head, and then put through the ring nine times, and afterwards the cake is laid under pillows, at night, to cause young persons to dream of their lovers. Mr. Douce

says this custom is not peculiar to the North of England, but prevails generally.

*Why did the common people break a piece of gold or silver in token of a verbal contract of marriage and promises of love?*

Because one half might be kept with the woman, while the other part remained with the man. Gay, in his "What d'ye call it," alludes to this practice.

Yet, Justices, permit us, ere we part,

To break this Ninepence, as you've broke our heart.

*Filbert: (Breaking the Ninepence)* As this divides, thus are we torn in twain.

*Kitty: (Joining the pieces)* And, as this meets, thus may we meet again.

*Why were certain ideas of good fortune attached to crooked money?*

Because, in the preceding custom, the piece broken between the contracted lovers must have been a crooked one. Thus, in *Hudibras*:

Like Commendation Ninepence crook't,  
With to and from my love is look't.

a circumstance confirmed also in the *Connoisseur*, No. 56, with an additional custom, of giving locks of hair woven in a true lover's knot. "If, in the course of their amour, the mistress gives the dear man her hair woven in a true lover's knot, or breaks a crooked ninepence with him, she thinks herself assured of his inviolate fidelity." This "bent token" has not been overlooked by Gay:

A Ninepence bent  
A token kind to Bumkinet is sent.

*Why was the "contracting cup" so named?*

Because, at the above ceremony, the parties drank together, else the contract was void. Thus, in one of Middleton's plays:

Ev'n when my lip touch'd the contracting cup.

*Why was the drinking off candles'-ends long practised by amorous gallants?*

Because, as a feat of gallantry, to swallow a candle's end formed a more formidable and disagreeable flap-dragon than any other substance; and, therefore, afforded a stronger testimony of zeal for the lady to whose health it was drunk.

*Why is a certain knot, which cannot be loosed, called Gordian?*

Because Gordius, (a king of Phrygia Major) being raised from the plough to the throne, placed the harness, or furniture of his wain and oxen, in the Temple of Apollo, tied in such a knot, that the monarchy of the world was promised to him that could untie it; which, when Alexander, "that tumour of a man," had long tried, and could not do, he cut it with his sword. Such, at least, is the ancient story: if not true, it is certainly ingenious.

*Why were confarreation and a ring used at weddings?*

Because both were used anciently as binding ceremonies by the heathens, in making agreements, grants, &c.; whence they have doubtless been applied to the most solemn of our engagements. We quote this from Brand, who also says, the supposed heathen origin of our marriage ring had well nigh caused the abolition of it during the Commonwealth. Butler, in his *Hudibras*, thus explains the reason why the Puritans wished it to be set aside:—

Others were for abolishing  
That tool of matrimony, a ring,  
With which th' unsanctify'd bridegroom  
Is married only to a thumb;  
(As wise as ringing of a pig  
That used to break up ground, and dig)  
The bride, to nothing but her will,  
That nulls the after-marriage still.

The antiquity of rings is attested by Scripture. Thus, when Pharaoh committed the government of all Egypt to Joseph, he took his ring from his finger, and gave it to him as a mark of power. The Israelitish women also wore rings, not only on their fingers, but also in their nostrils and ears. In an old Latin work, ascrib-



ing the invention of the ring to Tubal Cain, we find this pretty conceit. "The form of the ring being circular, that is, round and without end, importeth thus much: that their mutual love and hearty affection should roundly flow from the one to the other as in a circle—and that continually and for ever." Herrick has versified this quaintness with great felicity:

And as this round  
Is no where found  
To flaw or else to sever:  
So let our love  
As endlesse prove,  
And pure as gold for ever.

Mr. Brand notes, "this allusion, both to the form and metal of which the ring is composed, is elegant. Were it not too long, it would be the best *posie* for a wedding ring that was ever devised."

*Why is allusion made in the preceding lines, by Buller, to the thumb?*

Because the ring was formerly first placed upon the thumb. Thus, in the Hereford, York, and Salisbury Missals, the ring is directed to be put first upon the thumb, afterwards upon the second, then on the third, and lastly on the fourth finger.

*Why was a joint ring a common token among betrothed lovers?*

Because it denoted their mutual constancy. Dryden, in his play of Don Sebastian, date 1690, has the following beautiful passage on this custom:—

A curious artist wrought 'em  
With joynts so close as not to be perceiv'd;  
Yet they are both each other's counterpart.  
Her part had Juan inscribed, and his had Zayda,  
(You know these names were theirs) and, in the midst  
A heart, divided in two halves, was plac'd.  
Now, if the rivets of those rings, inclos'd,  
Fit not each other, I have forg'd this lye:  
But if they join, you must for ever part.

*Why were Gimmel rings so called?*

Because Gimmel is derived from Gemelli, twins, and these rings were twisted together. Again, we find,

in an old English Grammar: "a Gimmel or Gimbal," i. e. a double or twisted ring, from *Gemellus*; hence Gimbal and Jumbal are applied to other things twisted and twined after that manner." Herrick, in his *Hesperides*, mentions a Gimmel ring as a love-token:—

Thou sent'st to me a true love knot; but I  
Return'd a ring of Jimmalls, to imply  
Thy love had one knot, mine a triple tye.

*Why did disaffected lovers return each other's presents?*

Because, as a MS. in the Harleian library states, "by the Civil Law, whatsoever is given, *ex sponsalitia largitate*, betwixt them that are promised in marriage, hath a condition, (for the most part silent) that it may be had again, if marriage ensue not; but if the man should have had a kiss for his money, he should lose one half of that which he gave. Yet, with the woman it is otherwise, for kissing or not kissing, whatsoever she gave, she may ask, and have it again. However, this extends only to gloves, rings, bracelets, and such like small wares.—*Quoted by Strutt.*

*Why did some of the ancients make a ring denote servitude?*

Because the bridegroom was to give it to his bride, to denote to her that she is to be subject to him.

Rings appear to have been formerly given away at weddings. Anthony Wood writes that Killey, in 1589, at Trebona, "was openly profuse beyond the limits of a sober philosopher, and did give away in gold wire rings (or rings twisted with thin gold wires) at the marriage of one of his maid-servants, to the value of £4000.

The ring has ever been a favourite subject in amatory poetry: Davison, 1611, has the following beautiful sonnet—

*Upon sending his mistress a gold ring, with this poetic.*

PURE AND ENDLESSE.

If you would know the love which I you beare,  
Compare it to the ring which your faire hand

Shall make more precious when you shall it weare;  
 So my love's nature you shall understand.  
*Is it of metal pure?* so you shall prove  
 My love, which ne'ere disloyal thought did staine;  
*Hath it no end?* so endless is my love,  
 Unless you it destroy with your disdain.  
 Doth it the purer waxe the more 't is tri'de?  
 So doth my love; yet herein they dissent,  
 That whereas gold, the more 't is purifi'de,  
 By waxing lesse, doth show some part is spent;  
 My love doth waxe more pure by your more trying,  
 And yet increaseth in the purifying.

A still more beautiful allusion to the emblematical properties of the wedding ring is quoted by Brand from a collection of poems, date 1801:—

*To S\*\*\*\* D\*\*\*\*\*, with a Ring.*

Emblem of happiness not bought nor sold,  
 Accept this modest ring of virgin gold;  
 Love in the small, but perfect circle, trace,  
 And duty, in its soft, though strict embrace.  
 Plain, precious, pure, as best becomes the wife;  
 Yet firm to bear the frequent rubs of life.  
 Connubial love disdains a fragile toy,  
 Which rust can tarnish, or a touch destroy;  
 Nor much admires what courts the general gaze,  
 The dazzling diamonds' meretricious blaze,  
 That hides with glare the anguish of a heart  
 By nature hard, though polished bright by art.  
 More to thy taste the ornament that shows  
 Domestic bliss, and without glaring, glows.  
 Whose gentle pressure serves to keep the mind  
 To all correct, to one discreetly kind.  
 Of simple elegance th' unconscious charm,  
 The holy amulet to keep from harm;  
 To guard, at once, and consecrate the shrine;  
 Take this dear pledge—it makes and keeps thee mine.

*Why do weak persons prize a much-worn wedding ring?*

Because of the old proverb—

As your wedding ring wears,  
 Your cares will wear away.

This, observes Brand, has often been quoted to encourage and hasten the consent of a diffident and timorous mistress.

*Why was the ring placed on the left hand?*

Because this hand is much less used than the right,



and therefore the ring was less liable to be bruised or broken. This is from an old Latin author, and we find a similar reply in the *British Apollo*, 1788, and that, "for the same reason, the fourth finger was chosen, which is not only less used than either of the rest, but is more capable of preserving a ring from bruises, having this one quality peculiar to itself, that it cannot be extended but in company with some other finger, whereas the rest may be singly stretched out to their full length and straightness." The rigid notion of married women never putting off the wedding ring, is supposed to have originated in the Popish custom of hallowing the ring, besides the remembrance of the expression "till death us do part," in our marriage service.

*Why is the true-love knot so called?*

Because of its origin from the Danish verb *trulofa*, *fidem do*, (Lat.) I plight my troth or faith; a knot among the northern nations being the symbol of love, faith, and friendship, pointing out the indissoluble tie of affection and duty. Sir Thomas Browne, with his usual erudition, says, "the true lovers' knot had, perhaps, its origin from *Nodus Herculanus*, or that which was called *Hercules*; his knot resembling the snaky complication in the *Caduceus*, or rod of *Hermes*, and in which form the zone or woollen girdle of the bride, was fastened, as *Turnebus* observes in his *Adversaria*." Hence, evidently, the bride-favours or top-knots at marriages, which were formerly of various colours.

*Why was the bride-cup so called?*

Because it was borne before the bride in coming home from church.

*Why is the marriage ceremony celebrated with great splendour among the poor as well as the rich Jews?*

Because every guest brings a present, chiefly consisting of plate; on which account the lower orders are anxious to invite as many as possible; and not unfre-

quently, when the wedded pair are very poor, these gifts are disposed of immediately, to defray the expense of the feast, and assist the young couple in house-keeping.

The policy of marriage in humble life has been thus illustrated by an acute observer: "There are few labourers of either sex who live to an old age unmarried; scarcely any, it is said, of tolerable character; and this remark may be confirmed by any person's observation."

The witty Selden has three passages on marriage, which we cannot omit.—1. Of all the actions of a man's life, his marriage does least concern other people; yet of all actions of our life, 'tis most meddled with by other people.—2. Marriage is nothing but a civil contract: 't is true, 't is an ordinance of God; so is every other contract, God commands me to keep it when I have made it.—3. Marriage is a desperate thing; the frogs in *Æsop* were extreme wise; they had a great mind to some water, but they would not leap into the well, because they could not get out again.

*Why was Wednesday the chosen day for celebrating Jewish marriages?*

Because the Sanhedrin held its sitting on Thursday, and thus the newly married man could immediately bring his wife before them, if he had any ground of complaint. The choice of Wednesday still continues; but the original cause for selecting that day has long ceased to exist. If, however, either of the party has been previously married, Sunday is the day chosen, and music and dancing form no part of the entertainments. The ceremony is performed beneath a canopy, generally of crimson velvet, square, and supported at each corner by four of the persons present; a piece of carpet is spread beneath it, and the bridegroom and bride, the rabbi, and all concerned in the ceremony, stand under it while the contract is read, &c. It is

deposited at the synagogue, and is brought to the house where the wedding is celebrated, by the servants of the synagogue, who carry the canopy back when the ceremony is over.

*Why are Gretna Green marriages so named?*

Because the first mock priest, by whom this trade was founded, resided on the common or green betwixt Graitney and Springfield, on the borders of Scotland, but removed to the latter place in 1791, where his successors have since resided.

*Why are not Gretna Green marriages prevented by the Scottish church?*

Because the mock priest or coupler despises the threats of the kirk, as excommunication is the only penalty it can inflict. An attempt was made, in the General Assembly of 1826, to have this shameful system of fraud and profanity suppressed, but without effect. Upon an average, 300 couples are married in the year, and half a guinea is the lowest fee that is ever charged. In its legal effect, the ceremony performed at Gretna merely amounts to a confession before witnesses that certain persons are man and wife; and the reader is aware that little more is required to constitute a marriage in Scotland; a marriage which is perfectly binding in regard to property and the legitimacy of children.

*Why were Fleet marriages so called?*

Because they were performed in the Fleet-prison, by a set of drunken, swearing parsons, with their myrmidons, that wore black coats, and pretended to be clerks and registers to the Fleet, plying about Ludgate Hill, pulling and forcing people to some peddling ale-house, or brandy-shop, to be married; and even on Sundays stopping them as they went to church. In this way, from October 1704, to February 1705, there were performed in the Fleet, 2954 marriages, without either license or certificate of banns. Pennant, at a later period,

confirms this account of the nefarious traffic. He says, in walking by the prison in his youth, he was often accosted with "Sir, will you please to walk in and be married?" and he states that painted signs, containing a male and female hand conjoined, with the inscription, "Marriages performed within," were common along the building. This glaring abuse continued many years, to the ruin of children and destruction of their parents; and it was only put an end to by the marriage act in 1753.

*Why were knives formerly part of the accoutrements of a bride?*

Because it anciently formed part of the dress for women to wear a knife or knives, sheathed and suspended from their girdles; a finer, and more ornamented pair of which would very naturally be presented on the occasion of a marriage.—*Brand*. May not ladies having silver trinket knives also be a refinement of this custom?

*Why was part of the marriage ceremony performed at the church-porch?*

Because of an old law, by which, nowhere else but before the face of, and at the door of, the church, could the marriage dower have been lawfully assigned. Chaucer, who flourished during the reign of Edward III. alludes to this custom in his *Wife of Bath*, thus—

She was a worthy woman all her live,  
Husbands at the church-dore had she five.

*Why is the flower "sops of wine" so called?*

Because of its resemblance to the pieces of cake or wafers that were formerly immersed in wine, and drunk at weddings.

*Why did the Jews break the glass out of which the bride and bridegroom had drunk?*

Because it might admonish them of mortality.

*Why is it customary in some ranks to salute the bride the moment the marriage ceremony is concluded?*



Because of the ancient nuptial kiss in the church, enjoined by the York and Sarum Missals. So in dancing, a kiss was anciently the established fee of a lady's partner. What would the patronesses of Almack's say to such a custom in these days!

*Why does the bride usually wear a veil?*

Because of its origin in the Anglo-Saxon custom of performing the nuptial ceremony under a veil, or square piece of cloth, held at each corner by a tall man, over the bridegroom and bride, to conceal her virgin blushes; but if the bride was a widow, the veil was esteemed useless. At Sarum, when there was a marriage before mass, the parties kneeled together, and had a fine linen cloth (called the care-cloth) laid over their heads during the time of mass, till they received the benediction, and then were dismissed.—*Brand*. The canopy used at Jewish weddings has been noticed at page 16.

*Why are flowers and herbs strewn before the bride and bridegroom on their way to and from church?*

Because they have been fancifully supposed to propitiate the lives of the parties. The association enjoins the love of nature, from which spring the purest delights. Of its antiquity there are innumerable records scattered throughout the pages of our pastoral and dramatic poets. Herrick, in his *Hesperides*, says—

Glide by the banks of virgins then, and passe.  
The showers of roses, lucky four-leav'd grasse:  
The while the cloud of younglings sing,  
And drown ye with a flowrie Spring.

Who does not remember the pathos of Shakspeare to this purpose:

Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse.

In Holland, we read, the laurel is very conspicuous on these occasions, denoting that the wedding-day is one of triumph. In Wales, to this day, some cunning lass slyly awaits the approach of the wedding-party, and endeavours to throw a garland over the bride, which, if it fall on her is deemed lucky—but if it does

not, unfortunate.\* At the Coronations of our kings, the first person in the procession was a girl strewing flowers. At the recent coronation of our present monarch, the flower-strewing was omitted; but amidst its pageant glories, few attracted more admiration than the chaste dresses of six maids of honour, attendant on the queen: they were of pure white, draped up with garlands of white roses. Thus, the delightful association lingered even amidst a blaze of diamonds. Of these emblematical employments of flowers,—more anon.

*Why was rosemary worn at weddings?*

Because it was anciently thought to strengthen the memory. Hence, also, it was worn at funerals. For weddings, it was gilded and dipped in scented water. In a curious wedding sermon, (for such were formerly common) by Dr. Hacket, date 1607, the use of rosemary, at this time, is thus set forth:—"Rosemarinus, the rosemary, is for married men; the which by name, nature, and continued use, man challengeth as properly belonging to himself. It overtoppeth all the flowers in the garden, boasting man's rule. It helpeth the braine, strengtheneth the memorie, and is very medicinable for the head. Another property of the rosemary is, it affects the hart. Let this Ros Marinus, this Flower of Men, ensigne of your wisdom, love, and loyaltie, be carried not only in your hands, but in your heads and harts." Dekker thus touchingly alludes to the two-fold uses of rosemary, when speaking of a bride who died of the plague on her wedding day:—"here is a strange alteration, for the rosemary that was washt in sweet water to set out the bridall, is now wet in teares, to furnish her buriall." To conclude, Brand, from whom we have abridged these Notes, also says, that so late as the year 1698, the old

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\* From an unpretending little volume—*Cambrian Superstitions*, by W. Howells, of Tipton.

country use appears to have been kept up, of decking the bridal-bed with sprigs of rosemary.

*Why are nuptial garlands of the most remote antiquity?*

Because they were equally used by the Jews and the heathens. Their use in this country is traced to the Anglo-Saxons, among whom, after the benediction in the church, both the bride and the bridegroom were crowned with flowers, kept in the church for that purpose. These garlands were sometimes made of myrtle; and in the time of Henry VIII, the bride wore a garland of corn-ears, sometimes one of flowers. In a work, dated 1493, we find, "the garlande bytokeneth gladnesse, and the dignitie of the Sacrament of Wedlok."

*Why are those who have lost their love said to wear the willow-garland?*

Because willow was, in ancient days, especially among herdsmen and rustics, a badge of mourning, as may be collected from Virgil, in his *Eclogues*, where the nymphs and herdsmen are frequently introduced, sitting under a willow, mourning their loves. The same occurs in many Greek poets. For the ancients frequently selected, and, as it were, appropriated several trees, as indexes or testimonials of the various passions of mankind, from whom we continue, at this day, to use *rue* and *rosemary* at funerals; these two being representatives of a dead person, and *willow*, of love dead, or forsaken. The Jews, upon their being led into captivity, *Psalms* cxxxvii, are said to hang their harps upon willows, i. e. trees appropriated to men in affliction and sorrow, who had lost their beloved Sion.—*British Apollo*, (abridged) 1710.

A willow, also, in *Fuller's Worthies*, (Cambridgeshire) is described as a sad tree, whereof such who have lost their love, make their *mourning garlands*; and we know what exiles hung their harps upon such



doleful supporters. This tree delighteth in moist places, and is triumphant in the isle of Ely, where the roots strengthen their banks, and lop affords fuel for their fire. It groweth incredibly fast, it being a by-word in this county, that the profits by willows will buy the owner a horse, before that by other trees will pay for his saddle. Let me adde, that if green ashe may burn before a queen, withered willows may be allowed to burn before a lady."

The mention of the willow, in lugubrious poetry, is very frequent: nay, it appears the very emblem of melancholy. Thus, in a volume, date 1657:

A Willow Garland thou didst send  
 'T was forsook by thee;  
 Which did but only this portend,  
 'T was forsook by thee.

Since it is so, I'll tell thee what,  
 To-morrow thou shalt see  
 Me weare the willow, after that  
 To die upon the tree.

Again, "To the Willow Tree," in Herrick's *Hesperides* :—

Thou art to all lost love the best,  
 The only true plant found,  
 Wherewith young men and maids distrest,  
 And left of love, are crown'd.

When once the lover's rose is dead,  
 Or laid aside forlorne,  
 Then willow-garlands, 'bout his head,  
 Bedewed with tears, are worne.

When with neglect (the lover's bane)  
 Poor maids rewarded be,  
 For their love lost, their only gaine  
 Is but a wreath from thee.

And underneath thy cooling shade  
 (When weary of the light)  
 The love-spent youth, and love-sick maid,  
 Come to weep out the night.

*Why has it been facetiously said, that "Huntingdonshire is a very proper county for unsuccessful lovers to live in?"*

Because, "upon the loss of their sweethearts, they will find here an abundance of willow-trees, so that they may either *wear the willow green*, or hang themselves, which they please ; but the latter is reckoned the best remedy for slighted love."—*Comical Pilgrim's Travels through England*, 1723.

*Why was it formerly customary to present a forsaken lover with a stick or twig of hazel ?*

Because, probably of the double meaning of the Welsh *Cole*, signifying *loss*, as well as *hazel-wood*. Of the same sense is the following proverb, supposed to be the answer of a widow, on being asked why she wept : "painful is the smoke of the hazel."—*Owen's Welsh Dictionary*.

*Why was the Bride-ale so called ?*

Because it was derived from the circumstance of the bride's selling ale on the wedding-day, for which she received, by way of contribution, whatever handsome price the friends assembled on the occasion chose to pay her for it.

*Why were the Scottish Penny-weddings so called ?*

Because the expense of the entertainment was not defrayed by the young couple or relations, but by a club among the guests.

*Why was it customary to race from the church to the bridegroom's house ?*

Because whoever first reached the house with the news, won the kail, *i. e.* a smoking prize of spice broth, which stood ready prepared to reward the victor. Probably, however, it was a general advantage at the feast, since Dr. Jamieson thinks kail is used metonymically for the whole dinner, as constituting among our temperate ancestors the principal part. Hence, in giving a friendly invitation, it is common to say, "Will you come and tak' your kail wi' me ?" The better feeding English substitute mutton for kail, and the

French invitation is, *Voulez vous venir manger la soupe chez moi.*

*Why is it supposed that torches were borne at old English weddings, as in the heathen mythology?*

Because of the following lines in Herrick's *Hesperides* :

*Upon a Maid that dyed the day she was married.*

That morne which saw me made a bride

The ev'ning witnest that I dy'd.

*These holy lights wherewith they guide*

*Unto the bed the bashful bride,*

Serv'd but as tapers for to burne,

And light my reliques to their urne,

This Epitaph, which here you see,

Supply'd the Epithalamie.

*Why was music formerly common at English weddings?*

Because at the marriages of the Anglo-Saxons, the parties were attended to church by music. Bell-ringing is everywhere common.

*Why is the cushion-dance so called?*

Because it partly consists of women kneeling on a cushion to be kissed by the male dancers. Selden speaks of the "Cushion Dance, and all the company dance, lord and groom, lady and kitchenmaid; no distinction—omnium gatherem, tolly, polly, hoite come toite." The Quintain was also common at weddings. (See Part VI. page 45 of the present work.)

*Why do weak persons wish the sun to shine at their wedding?*

Because this was once considered a good omen of bright prospects in life. Herrick alludes to this custom :

While that others do divine

Blest is the bride on whom the sun doth shine.

The same class of persons consider rain on the dead at funerals as typical of resurrection

*Why was the posset so called?*

Because of its origin from the French *poser, rendre*,

(Lat.) to settle ; thus, when the milk breaks, the cheesy parts, being heavier, subside. Herrick alludes to the Wedding Sack-posset :

What short prayers shall be said ;  
And how the Posset shall be made  
With cream of lilies, (not of kine)  
And maidens blush for spiced wine.

*Why was the Dunmow Flitch of Bacon custom established ?*

Because Lord Fitzwalter, in the reign of Henry III, ordered, that whatever married man did not repent of his marriage, or quarrel with his wife, in a year and a day after it, should go to his Priory, and demand the bacon—on his swearing to the truth, kneeling on two stones in the churchyard.—*Gent. Mag.*

Memoranda of three claims only are found prior to the Reformation ; and Mr. Ellis, in his Notes to Brand, says of just as many since.

The Dunmow Bacon is alluded to in the Visions of Pierce Plowman, and in Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Prologue. A similar custom prevailed at Winchmore, in Staffordshire.

*Why is Riding the Stang so called ?*

Because it consists of riding across a long piece of wood, from the Icelandic *staung*, *hasta*, (Lat.) a spear or pole, carried by two persons across their shoulders. It was used when a woman had beat her husband ; the poor fellow being thus carried ; or when he could not be caught, some young fellow being put on the pole to proclaim that it is not on his own account that he is thus treated, but on that of another person, whom he names. Ray tells us, that in his time the word *stang* was used in some colleges at Cambridge ; to stang scholars in Christmas time, being to cause them to ride on a colt-staff or pole, for missing chapel.

*Why is Skimmington Riding so called ?*

Because it is a sort of burlesque procession of a man



who suffers himself to be beat by his wife ; in short, a species of *slanging*. Mr. Douce derives its name from a skimming-ladle, which is carried in the procession ; but Mr. Ellis thinks the word Skimmington signifies an arrant scold, and has most probably been derived from the name of some woman of great notoriety in that line.

#### SOCIAL ARTS.

*Why were the internal communications in Britain so materially improved by the Romans ?*

Because they made excellent roads, which extended through all parts of the empire ; some of them can yet be traced in England, running as straight as an arrow ; one of these is Watling-street, so often mentioned in history : but after the fall of the Roman Empire, their roads were neglected, and they fell into decay.

Mr. Palgrave observes, with touching simplicity of style, "Many of our Roman cities have become entirely wasted and desolate. Silchester is one of these : corn-fields and pastures cover the spot once adorned with public and private buildings, all of which are now wholly destroyed. Like the busy crowds who inhabited them, the edifices have sunk beneath the fresh and silent green sward ; but the flinty wall which surrounded the city, is yet firm, and the direction of the streets may be discerned by the difference of tint in the herbage ; and the ploughshare has turned up the medals of the Cæsars, so long dead and forgotten, who were once the masters of the world."

#### BUILDING, ETC.

*Why were the Britons indebted to the Saxons for but few social improvements ?*

Because "they were so far from having arts, that they could not even build with stone. The church at Glaston was thatched. They lived sluttishly in their houses, they ate a great deal of beef and mutton, and drank

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good ale in a brown mazzard, and their very kings were but a sort of farmers. The Normans then came, and taught them civility and buidling."—*Aubrey, MS.*

*Why are beautiful tessellated pavements sometimes discovered underground in England?*

Because they are the remains of the colonies formed by the Romans in this country, and peopled with the Roman inhabitants, who came hither from Italy, accompanied by their wives and children. Within the circuit of their fortifications, they built temples, and palaces, and baths, and other splendid structures, accordant with their luxurious habits; which have been destroyed by fire or siege.

*Why were so many of the ancient English residences called "Halls"?*

Because the chief feature in the interior of each was the great or stone *hall*, which thus gave its name to the whole house. It corresponded to the refectory of the abbey. The principal entrance to the main building, from the first or outer court, opened into a *thorough lobby*, having on one side several doors or arches, leading to the buttery, kitchen, and domestic offices; on the other side, the hall, parted off by a screen, generally of wood elaborately carved, and enriched with shields and a variety of ornament, and pierced with several arches having folding doors. Above the screen, and over the lobby, was the minstrel's gallery, and on its front were usually hung armour, antlers, and similar memorials of the family exploits. The hall itself was a large and lofty room, in shape of a parallelogram; the roof, the timbers of which were framed with pendants richly carved and emblazoned with heraldic insignia, formed one of its most striking features. "The top-beam of the hall," in allusion to the position of his coat of arms, was a symbolical manner of drinking the health of the master of the house. At the upper end of this chamber, furthest

from the entrance, the floor was usually raised a step, and this part was styled the *dais*, or high place. On one side of the dais was a deep embayed window, reaching nearly down to the floor; the other windows ranged along one or both sides of the hall, at some height above the ground, so as to leave room for wainscoting or arras below them. They were enriched with stained glass, representing the armorial bearings of the family, their connexions, and royal patrons, and between the windows were hung full-length portraits of the same persons. The royal arms usually occupied a conspicuous station at either end of the room. The head table was laid for the lord and principal guests on the raised place, parallel with the upper end wall, and other tables were ranged along the sides for inferior visitors and retainers. Tables, so placed, were said to stand "banquet-wise." In the centre of the hall was the *rere-dosse*, or fire-iron, against which fagots were piled, and burnt upon the stone floor, the smoke passing through an aperture in the roof immediately overhead, which was generally formed into an elevated lantern, a conspicuous ornament to the exterior of the building. In later times, a wide arched fire-place was formed in the wall on one side of the room. The halls, in fact, of our colleges, at either university, and the inns of court, still remain, as in Aubrey's time, accurate examples of the ancient baronial and conventual halls: preserving, not merely their original form and appearance, but the identical arrangement and service of the tables. Even the central fire is, in some instances, kept up, being of charcoal, burnt in a large brazier, in lieu of the *rere-dosse*. In other respects, probably little, if any thing, has been altered since the Tudor æra; and those who are curious to know the mode in which our ancestors dined in the reign of the Henrys and Edwards, may be gratified by attending that meal in the great halls of Christchurch or Trinity, and tasking his imagination to convert the principal and fellows

at the upper table, into the stately baron, his family, and guests; and the gowned commoners, at the side tables, into the liveried retainers.—*Quarterly Review*.

The finest specimens are the magnificent hall at Westminster, built by Edward II; and the great hall at Eltham, also probably built by the same monarch, and but little inferior in grandeur to that of Westminster. The Coronation Banquet of George IV, in the latter, was a splendid illustration of the festal purposes for which this spacious hall was erected.

Aubrey, writing in the seventeenth century, thus describes, in his quaint and picturesque way, the characteristics of the old manorial, or hall-houses of the times of the Plantagenets and Tudors. "The architecture of an old English gentleman's house, (especially in Wiltshire and thereabout) was a high strong wall, a gate-house, a great hall, and parlour; and within the little green court, where you come in, stood on one side the *barne*. They then thought not the noise of the threshold ill musique."

*Why would a great hall be inappropriate in a modern residence?*

Because such an apartment is now never applied to its ancient purposes, from the total change in domestic habits. Aubrey says, "in the time of Henry VII and VIII, in the hall and parlours there were wrote texts of Scripture, and good sentences on the painted cloths, which does something evidence the piety of those days more than now."

*Why is the modern vestibule improperly called a "hall"?*

Because it has none of the proportions and appearance of the ancient hall. The idea of fitness and utility is wanting. The room we know not to be applied to the purposes of the old hall, and the association is, therefore, injured, if not destroyed.

*Why is the gate of a city called a bar?*

Because it is a *bar-rier*. Hence *Temple-bar*, and *Holborn-bar* in London; and the fortified gates in York, &c.

*Why were ale-houses and inns but rare in the middle ages?*

Because, when men "had a mind to drink they went to the friaries, and when they travelled, they had entertainment in the religious houses, if occasion so long required. The meeting of the gentry was not then in tippling-houses, but in the fields and forests, with their hawkes and houndes, with their bugle-hornes in silk baudrics, &c."—*Aubrey*.

*Why were armories common in ancient mansions?*

Because the lords or owners might promptly supply their retainers with arms in case of attack. *Aubrey* tells us that "The halls of justices of peace were dreadful to behold. The screenes were garnished with corslets and helmets gaping with open mouth, with coates of mail, lances, pikes, halberts, brown-bills, battle-axes, bucklers, and the modern callivers, petronells and (in King Charles's time) muskets and pistolls." In these peaceful times, the law affords better security than mere weapons of defence; and armories in private residences have dwindled to a few trusty swords, pistols, and carbines, which may be seen in terrific display over the mantel-piece of the steward's room, as objects of terror, and means of defence against burglars.

*Why was it customary to discontinue fires at Easter?*

Because the ancient hall fire was discontinued at Easter Day, then called "God's Sondaye." A quaint religious writer, of the date of 1511, thus speaks of this custom. "Ye know well that it is the manner at this daye to do the fire out of the hall, and the black wynter brondes, and all thynges that is foule with fume and smoke, shall be done awaye; and where the fire was shall be gayly arrayed with fayre floures, and strewed with green ryshes all aboute."



*Why do we use the expression—to sit round the fire?*

Because formerly the hearth was commonly in the middle of the apartment. Hence also, the old saying, "Round about the coal fire." Aubrey wrote, in 1678, "Anciently, before the Reformation, ordinary men's houses, as copyholders and the like, had no chimneys, but flues, like corner-holes; some of them were in being when I was a boy." See also *Chimneys*, in Part III of the present work.

*Why in the middle ages did all lords keep trumpeters?*

Because, upon any occasion of bustling, a great lord summoned those that held under him by the sound of trumpet; those again sounded their trumpets, and so downwards to the copyholders and villeins.

*Why is the manufacture of bricks and tiles supposed to have been known in England at an early period?*

Because it was practised in such perfection by the Romans, during their occupation of the island, as is evident in the numerous remains of their buildings. It has, however, been asserted, that up to the reign of Elizabeth, the houses of the gentry throughout England, were built entirely of timber; whereas, of the mansions of earlier date than that reign, which remain entire or in part to this day, three-fourths at least are built of stone or brick. The latter material is stated by Bagford and others, to have been first introduced in the reign of Henry VII. Yet Endure Palace, in Oxfordshire, erected by William Delapole, and Hurstmonceaux Castle, in Sussex, both of which are of brick, are attributed to the reign of Henry VI. Oxburgh Hall, in Norfolk, was erected in the reign of Edward IV. Leland mentions the walls of Hungerford, as early of Richard II, being of that material; and Stow says, that Ralph Stratford, Bishop of London, enclosed the burial-ground in the Charter House, for those that died of the plague in 1348, with a wall of brick. That roofing tiles were in use before the

time of Richard I, is proved by the order made in the first year of that reign, Henry Fitzalwayne being Lord Mayor of London, that the houses of that city should be covered with 'brent tyle,' instead of 'strawe' or reeds.

The ancient name for bricks appears to have been wall-tiles, to distinguish them from floor-tiles, used for paving.

*Why did James I. enforce by proclamation the use of brick and stone, in the building of London, which had previously been of wood?*

Because he might prevent the too rapid consumption of our native forests, as well as ensure greater security against fire.

*Why, in old English houses, did the stories jut one over the other, so as almost to arch across narrow streets?*

Because their frame-work was of timber, and the wooden foundations might thus be kept dry, at a time when no other mode was employed for conveying away the rain-water from roofs, than in the dropping eaves, or dragon-mouth spout.

*Why may the artisan now be said to enjoy luxuries in domestic furniture, which were, but three centuries ago, beyond the reach of the crowned head?*

Because heavy tables, formed of planks laid upon tressles, massy oak benches or stools for seats, and floors strewn with straw, formed the accommodation which satisfied the princes and prelates of our early history. Even in the time of Elizabeth, the comfort of a carpet was seldom felt, and the luxury of a fork wholly unknown. Rushes commonly supplied the place of the former, and the fingers were the invariable substitutes for the latter.

Harrison, writing in the time of Elizabeth, thus describes the furniture in use immediately before his time:—"Our fathers (yea, we ourselves also) have lien full oft vpon straw pallets, or rough mats, covered

onlie with a sheete, vnder coverlets made of dogswain or hopharlots, (I use their own term) and a good round log under their heads instead of a bolster or pillow. If it were so that our fathers or the good man of the house, had, within seven yeares after his marriage, purchased a mattrasse or flockebed, and thereto a sacke of chaff to rest his head upon, he thought himself to be as well lodged as the lord of the towne, that, peradventure, lay seldom in a bed of down or whole feathers. As for servants, if they had any sheet above them it was well; for seldom had they any under their bodies to keep them from the pricking strawes that ran oft through the canvas of the pallet, and rased their hardened hides."

*Why was the hair of the goat one of the earliest articles employed in clothing?*

Because, when mixed up with the short and soft fur of other animals, and united with the gum of trees and animal glue, it became that coarse but solid felt, known in Northern Asia from the earliest ages, and noticed by historians and poets. It was probably of this material that the black war-tunics of the Cimbri were made, in their conflicts with Marius; and we know it was the winter dress of the auxiliary cohorts, and even of the Roman Legions in Britain, at least to the era of Constantine.

*Why is plaid so called?*

Because it was originally composed of ribbon plait.

*Why were plaid or check dresses common to most nations of northern latitudes during their state of incipient civilisation?*

Because, possessing a knowledge of the distaff, they obtained the thread, which they platted into ribbons, and these they again platted into broader and warmer pieces; the stripes almost universal in the south were the same plats sewed together. That goat's hair was the chief ingredient among the Scandinavians, is



proved by their divinities being dressed in the goat's kirtle.

*Why were the goat and sheep held sacred among the early nations?*

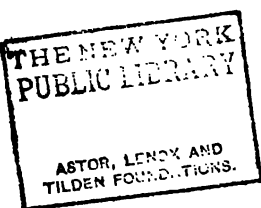
Because the wandering shepherd guided his nightly course by the stars; he observed the connexion of the seasons by the passage of the sun through certain parts of the heavens; he named the stars within this range after the objects most familiar to his mind, and his zodiac was thus formed with *Capricorn* and *Aries* among its members or houses. These names, at first applied for the purpose of divisional designation, as they stood connected with real or supposed duties, or events relating to pastoral life, gradually acquired the character of sacred; and the same minds which had selected them from common objects, by no uncommon transition, typified them with characteristic attributes, and then regarded their representatives as objects of veneration, of hope, or of fear. Among the Greeks, the goat and sheep were held sacred to one or more divinities, and sacrificed at their altars. In the Jewish law they were likewise sacrificed, but not with the same intention: for here the goat was expressly marked as emblematical of atonement, and in the Christian dispensation, the beautiful image of exalted innocence bearing the sins of mankind, is still retained in the figurative designation of the lamb.—*Cuvier*.

*Why is the British name of Stonehenge, Choir-gaur, or the Giant's Dance?*

Because it was fabled to have been built by giants, or otherwise constructed by magic art. Volumes have been written upon this venerable wreck of time, but Stonehenge may briefly be described as one of the temples in which the Britons worshipped their deities; composed of large rough stones disposed in a circle; for they had not sufficient skill to execute any finished edifices. The huge masses of rock may still be seen

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near Salisbury, gray with age, and the structure is yet sufficiently perfect to enable us to understand how the whole pile was anciently arranged. These masses are so large, that they seem to have been raised by more than human power, and thus to favour the above tradition.

#### RELIGION AND EDUCATION.

*Why was the establishment of Christianity in Britain of the greatest temporal as well as spiritual advantage to the community?*

Because a large proportion of the population consisted either of slaves or of churls or villains, who were compelled to till the ground for the benefit of their masters. These classes immediately gained the comfort of rest, one day in seven. So strictly did the temporal laws protect the observance of the seventh day, the right and privilege of the poor, that the master who compelled his slave to work on the Sunday, was deprived of the means of abusing his power—the slave obtained his freedom.

*Why were not poor's rates requisite before the Reformation?*

Because, in the quaint language of Aubrey, "the charitable doles given at religious houses, and church ale in every parish, did the business. In every parish there was a church-house, to which belonged spits, pots, crocks, &c. for dressing provisions. Here the house-keepers met, and were merry, and gave their charity. The young people came there too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, &c. Mr. A. Wood assures me there were few or no alms-houses before the time of King Henry VIII; that at Oxford, opposite to Christchurch, is one of the most ancient in England. In every church was a poor man's box, and the like at great inns.

"There were very few free schools in England before the Reformation. Youth were generally taught

Latin in the Monasteries, and young women had their education, not at Hackney, as now, scilicet, anno 1678, but at nunneries, where they learnt needle-work, confectionary, surgery, physic, (apothecaries and surgeons being at that time very rare) writing, drawing, &c. Old Jackquar, now living, has often seen, from his house, the nuns of St. Mary, Kingston in Wilts, coming forth into the Nymph Hay, with their rocks and wheels, to spin, sometimes to the number of threescore and ten, all of whom were young girls sent there for education."

*Why was the Abbey "close" so called?*

Because of its origin from *clausum*, shut or enclosed. Dr. Whitaker describes a close as an area of from fifty to ninety acres, enclosed by a high and sometimes embattled wall, and entered by one or two gateways. It included all the appendages of a large domain, as a grange, or farm-house, barns, stables, mill, &c. Around the principal quadrangle were disposed the church and its appendages, the hall, refectory, almonry, chapter-house, locutory or parlour, infirmary, scriptorium, kitchen, and other domestic offices. This great mass of irregular but stately buildings, when all standing, must have appeared like a small fortified town, with its embattled wall and turreted gate, surmounted by the great church, shooting high above the roofs.

*Why was a bakehouse formerly attached to churches?*

Because the clergy were charged to bake the oblation (i. e. the bread in the eucharist) *themselves*, or their servants *in their presence*. In old times, tenants were compelled to bake at the lord's oven, as they were to grind corn at his mill. This custom of baking still continues at Daventry, Northamptonshire.

*Why are the edicts of the Pope called Bulls?*

Because the seals appended to them were formerly of gold Bullion. The bull of Pope Clement VII, conferring the title of *Defender of the Faith* on Henry VIII, had such a seal of gold affixed to it.

*Why are members of Universities said to be matriculated?*

Because they are then entered in the *Matricula*, list, or register of admission.

*Why is there so much unappropriated room in our Cathedrals?*

Because in the Catholic times when they were erected, such room was appropriated to cross-carrying, canopy-carrying, censuring, flower-strewing, and all the other accessories of the grand pageantry, which distinguished Catholic from Protestant worship.

*Why is part of a church called a chancel?*

Because formerly it was parted from the body of the church by *cancellæ*, or lattice-work.

*Why are some church towers called campanile?*

Because they contain the *campana* (Lat.) or bell.

*Why were vanes on steeples so frequently made in the form of cocks?*

Because of their appropriateness, in papal times, to remind the clergy of watchfulness; the tail of the cock, being conveniently shaped to catch the wind, was used as the face of the vane.

*Why are some churches of a circular form?*

Because they were built by affluent crusaders in imitation of that of the Holy Sepulchre, at Jerusalem. There are four examples almost in perfect preservation: The church of St. Mary, Temple, London, lately renovated; St. Sepulchre, Northampton; St. Mary, Cambridge; and that of Little Maplestead, Essex.

Circular temples are generally supposed to have been built with astronomical reference, especially the noble temple at Stonehenge. They existed among the Israelites. In Exodus, xxiv. 4, it is written that "Moses rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars." Again, in Joshua, iv. 9, "Joshua set up twelve stones;" and it is worthy of remark, that the twelve pillars of Moses



and Joshua, corresponded with the number of stones of the inner circles at Abury.

*Why is part of the Church of England service called the Litany?*

Because of its origin from the Greek for supplication; the Litany being a form of supplicatory prayer.

*Why, in the Church of England Catechism, is the question, What is your name? answered N or M?*

Because ecclesiastical forms ran, *Ego N. Episcopus Cov. et Lich.* and *Ego N. Decanus Eccl. Lich.* where N. means *Nomen*, intimating that the name is to be there inserted.—*Pegge's Anonymiana.*

*Why is chanting part of the Cathedral service?*

Because such was the practice of the churches in the earliest ages of Christianity, and was no doubt derived from the usages of the Jewish ritual. In the reign of Theodosius, towards the end of the fourth century, St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, introduced into the churches of that place the Ambrosian chant, in order to rectify the practice of ecclesiastical chanting, which was then falling into great confusion; and St. Augustine, when speaking of his first entrance into the church there, after his conversion, says, "the voices flowed in at my ears, truth was distilled in my heart, and the affection of piety overflowed in sweet tears of joy." That sublime composition, the *Te Deum*, is generally attributed to St. Ambrose, though the Benedictine editors of his works do not describe it as his; whilst by Cave and Stillingfleet it is said to have been composed by him in conjunction with St. Augustine; and Usher ascribes it to Nicentius. The method of singing and chanting was, according to St. Eusebius, first established by St. Ambrose at Antioch, where he had long resided.

*Why do some persons turn their faces eastward at the repetition of the creed?*

Because of the ancient practice of the church



worshipping towards the East. This, says Bourne, they did, that by so worshipping they might lift up their minds to God, who is called the Light, and the Creator of Light; therefore turning, says St. Austin, our faces to the East, from whence the day springs, that we might be reminded of turning to a more excellent nature, namely, the Lord. As also, that as man was driven out of Paradise, which is towards the East, he ought to look that way, which is an emblem of his desire to return thither. Again, it was used when they were baptized: they first turned their faces to the West, and so renounced the Devil, and then to the East, and made their covenant with Christ. Lastly, those of the ancient church prayed that way, believing that our Saviour would come to judgment from that quarter of the heavens, St. Damascen asserting that when he ascended into Heaven, he was taken up eastward, and that his disciples worshipped in that way; and therefore chiefly it was, that in the ancient church they prayed with their faces to the East.

Selden likewise says, " 't is in the main allowed that the Heathens did, in general, look towards the East, when they prayed, even from the earliest ages of the world." The Rev. Mr. White, in his *History of Selborne*, in speaking of the church, says; "I have all along talked of the East and West end, as if the chancel stood exactly true to those points of the compass; but this is by no means the case, for the fabric bears so much to the north of the east, that the four corners of the tower, and not the four sides, stand to the four Cardinal points. The best method of accounting for this deviation, seems to be, that the workmen, who probably were employed in the longest days, endeavored to set the chancels to the rising of the Sun."

*Why are altars of the highest antiquity?*

Because of their early mention in Holy Writ, where it is said, that "Noah built an altar to the Lord."

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*Why were altars in the patriarchal times generally of single blocks of stone?*

Because large, massive, unhewn stones, were considered to be emblematic of dignity and power. The indefatigable Mr. Britton, in his *Architectural Dictionary*, says: "In the Celtic, or Druidical temples, there were altars; and it is generally agreed, that a flat stone, near the western part of the interior area of Stonehenge, was used for that purpose. Cromlechs are considered to have been used as altars, by some antiquaries." In the early ages, altars were made of wood, and were mostly small, plain, and portable; but, on the establishment of Christianity under Constantine, stone was used. Erasmus mentions a wooden altar as remaining in his time at Canterbury Cathedral; and Batteley enumerates thirty-seven altars here prior to the Reformation. In parish-churches also, were altars dedicated to different saints; that of Lambeth, in Surrey, had five besides the high altar. Bequests were often made to provide candlesticks, sconces, lamps, and oil, for the different altars; and, in some parts of the country, a tax, called *Leot-shot*, was levied to furnish wax for the same purpose.

*Why is the communion-table also called the altar?*

Because plain communion-tables were substituted for altars in parish churches, on the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Numerous entries in the churchwardens' books, prove a strict compliance with the queen's order. Thus, in those of St. Helen's, Abingdon, Berks, are these items: "An. 1559. For taking down the altere, 20d."—"An. 1560. Payde for tymber and making the communion-table, 6s. For a carpet for the communion-table, 2s. 8d. For paving the place where the altere stood, 2s. 8d."

*Why is Ave-Maria Lane so called?*

Because, in Popish times, text-writers and bead-makers dwelt there.



*Why is Paternoster Row so called?*

Because the stationers or text-writers dwelt there, who wrote and sold all sorts of books then in use, viz. A, B, C,—with the Paternoster, Ave, Creed, Graces, &c. The bead-turners were also called Paternoster-makers.

*Why is Clerkenwell so called?*

Because, around a well here, the parish-clerks of London assembled in former times, to perform sacred plays.

*Why is the + used as a mark?*

Because Withered, king of Kent, first adopted the sign of the cross for his mark to his grants, he being incapable to write his name. The majority of the barons who signed Magna Charta, made their marks, being ignorant of the science of writing.

*Why was learning in the seventeenth century but little conducive to domestic enjoyment?*

Because education then enjoined pedantic manners, greatly to the exclusion of ease and enjoyment: learning was then, as Aubrey describes it, downright pedantry.

A picture of the means of education, by the same writer, in 1678, is worthy of quotation:—"The conversation and habits of those times, were as starcht as their bands and square beards, and gravity was then taken for wisdom. The doctors in those days were but old boys, when quibbles passed for wit, even in their sermons. The gentry and citizens had but little learning of any kind, and their way of breeding up their children was suitable to the rest. They were as severe to their children as their schoolmasters,—and their schoolmasters as masters of the house of correction: the child perfectly loathed the sight of his parents, as the slave his torture. Gentlemen, of thirty and forty years old, were to stand like mutes and fools bare-headed before their parents; and the daughters (grown women) were to stand at the cup-board side during the

whole time of their proud mother's visit, unless (as the fashion was) leave was desired forsooth that a cushion should be given them to kneel upon, brought them by the serving-man, after they had done sufficient penance in standing. The boys (I mean the young fellows) had their foreheads turned up and stiffened with spittle; they were to stand mannerly forsooth, thus, their foretop ordered as before, with one hand at the bandstring, and the other behind. The gentlewomen had prodigious fans, as is to be seen in old pictures, like that instrument which is used to drive feathers, and in it had a handle, at least half a yard long; with these the daughters were oftentimes corrected, (Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice, rode the circuit with such a fan; Sir William Dugdale told me he was an eyewitness of it. The Earl of Manchester also used such a fan;) but fathers and mothers slasht their daughters in the time of their besom discipline, when they were perfect women. At Oxford, (and I believe at Cambridge) the rod was frequently used by the tutors and deans; and Dr. Potter, of Trinity College, I knew right well, whipt his pupil with his sword by his side, when he came to take his leave of him to go to the inns of court."

*Why is it said that swearing "came in at the head, but it is going out at the tail?"*

Because, at first, it prevailed among the nobility and gentry; whereas, it is now chiefly heard among the lower classes.

*Why are the low vulgar called groundlings?*

Because of their resemblance to a groundling, or fish which keeps at the bottom of the water.

#### BELLS.

*Why was the curfew-bell so called?*

Because it was rung by a law of William the Norman, at eight o'clock at night, that all persons should

then cover their lights and fires, (*couvere feu*) and go to bed. The practice of this custom, to its full extent, we are told, was observed only during that and the following reign. Thus, the curfew is supposed to be of Norman origin; but Henry maintains that it was, at that period, used in different parts of Europe, as a precaution against fires, then frequent and fatal from so many houses being built of wood. Peshall, in his *History of Oxford*, refers the curfew to an order of King Alfred. The only representation of the curfew, in shape, resembles a Dutch oven, and is said to have been of copper, ten inches high, sixteen inches wide, and nine inches deep; the ashes were raked in a heap to the back of the chimney, against which was placed the open part of the curfew, thus nearly excluding the air, and extinguishing the fire. Dr. Pegge, the antiquarian, conjectures the curfew to have been also a contrivance for baking bread, &c. as well as a covering for the fire. We may here mention, that Dutch ovens are of classical antiquity; and the resemblance between them and the curfew is against the conclusion of its Norman origin. The ascribed imposition of the curfew custom, as a specimen of the Conqueror's rigid sway, therefore, merits but little credence. Thomson has thus described this supposed act of tyranny:

The shiv'ring wretches, at the Curfew sound,  
Dejected sunk into their sordid beds,  
And, through the mournful gleam of better times,  
Mus'd sad, or dreamt of better.

Gray's elegiac mention of the curfew, is as familiar as "household words."

*Why are bells tolled in some London parishes at eight o'clock?*

Because such was the hour at which the curfew was generally rung; though it must be added, that the above custom has, in most instances, been settled by the special legacy of some wealthy parishioner.



*Why were Canterbury bells so called?*

Because they were carried by pilgrims for their solace, and the pilgrimage to Canterbury was the most common.

*Why were bells baptized?*

Because, thus blessed, they were endowed with great powers, allaying, on being rung, all storms, driving away evil spirits, &c. Thus, the bell belonging to the church of Holywell, was christened in honour of St. Winifrede. On the ceremony, all the gossips laid hold of the rope, bestowing a name on the bell; and the priest, sprinkling it with holy water, baptized it in the name of the Father, &c.—*Pennant*.

The ascribed uses of bells are thus set forth in some monkish lines, translated by Fuller :

Funera plango . .	{ Men's deaths I tell By doleful knell.
Fulgura frango . .	{ Lightning and thunder I break asunder.
Sabbata pango . .	{ On Sabbath all To church I call.
Excito lentos . .	{ The sleepy head I raise from bed.
Dissipo ventos . .	{ The winds so fierce I do disperse.
Paco cruentos . .	{ Men's cruel rage I do assuage.

"Laudo Deum, verum, plebem voco, congrego clerum, defunctos plero, pestem fugo, festa decoro."

*Why was the appellation of "Tom" applied to so many large bells?*

Because they were baptized "Thomas," in honour of that "Saint Traitor," (as Fuller styles him) Thomas à Becket. Thus, Tom of Lincoln, and Great Tom, "the mighty Tom," of Christchurch, Oxford.

*Why, in the colleges at Oxford, does the Bible-Clerk knock at every room-door with a key, to waken the students in the morning, before he rings the chapel-bell?*

Because it is a vestige of an ancient custom before the invention of bells, for convening religious assemblies

in monasteries: it was, by going by turns to every one's cell, and, with the knock of a hammer, calling the monks to church. This instrument was called, the Night Signal and the Wakening Mallet.—*Bingham.*

*Why are there distinct knells, before the regular tolling of the bell, to denote whether it be for a man, woman, or child?*

Because it originated in the custom in ringing the passing bell, for which we have substituted tolling the bell after death. Thus, Durand, who lived in the twelfth century, tells us, "that bells must be tolled twice for a woman, and thrice for a man; if for a clergyman, as many times as he had orders; and, at the conclusion, a peal on all the bells, to distinguish the quality of the person for whom the people are to put up their prayers. A bell, too, must be rung while the corpse is conducted to church, and during the bringing it out of church to the grave." Mr. Brand says, "this seems to account for a custom still preserved in the North of England, of making numeral distinctions at the conclusion of this ceremony; *i. e.* nine knells for a man, six for a woman, and three for a child, which are undoubtedly the vestiges of this ancient injunction of Popery."

*Why was there originally a high price for tolling the largest bell of the church?*

Because, exclusive of the additional labour, superstition ascribed to its louder sound the property of scaring evil spirits further off, to be clear of its knell, by which the poor soul got so much more the start of them. Besides, being heard further off, it would likewise procure the dying man a greater number of prayers. This dislike of spirits to bells is mentioned in the Golden Legend, by Wynkyn de Worde.—*Grose.*

In our times, great bells denote great age or rank. The great bell of St. Paul's, in London, is never tolled, except at the deaths and funerals of members of the

Royal Family, or of the bishops and lord mayors of London. It weighs four tons and a quarter, and has inscribed on it, "Richard Phelps made me, 1716." On similar occasions too, the bells are rung muffled, or in "dead peals;" as also on the death and funeral of a bell-ringer.

*Why are clocks supposed to have been so called from the bells in them?*

Because, in a passage of Bede, in King Alfred's Saxon version, in rendering *campana*, he has used *cluggan*, which properly signifies a clock. Clock is the old German name for a bell; and hence, it is called in French, *une cloche*. There were no clocks in England in Alfred's time; he is said to have measured his time by wax candles, marked with circular lines, to distinguish the hours.—*Ellis's Notes to Brand*.

Shakspeare has a pathetic mention of the bell of a clock in the soliloquy of the melancholy Richard II, in the dungeon of Pomfret castle:—

The sounds that tell what hour it is,  
Are clamorous groans, that strike upon my heart,  
*Which is the bell.*

*Why are bells rung on occasions of rejoicings?*

Because, in times of Popery, this mark of respect was paid to emperors, bishops, and abbots, at places under their own jurisdiction; whence we seem to have derived the modern compliment of welcoming persons of consequence by a cheerful peal.

The parts of a bell are, the body, or carrel, the clapper within, and the ear, or cannon, without, whereby it is hung to a large beam of wood. Its usual material is a compound of iron and brass, called bell-metal. The thickness of a bell's edge is commonly one-fifteenth of the diameter of the bottom, and its height twelve times its thickness. The bell-founders or makers have a diapason or scale, by which they regulate the size, thickness, weight, and tone of the bells; and it may be remarked, that their sounds may be heard further in

plain or flat countries, than in hilly places, still further in valleys than in plains.—*Britton*.\*

"Bells," says Mr. Coleridge, "are the poor man's only music;" and in the ages of Merry England, the festivals of her calendar were welcomed with joyous peals in every parish. In short, to bells we may ascribe nearly all the effects attributed by Sir William Temple to the power of music:—"To raise joy and grief, to give pleasure and pain, to give motions to the feet as well as to the heart, to compose disturbed thoughts, and to assist and heighten devotion itself." Quoting Marvell's phrase for music too, they are "the mosaic of the air."

*Why was the Passing Bell so called?*

Because it was tolled for a person who was dying, that is, *passing* from life to death. In the "Advertisements for due Order, &c." 7th year of Queen Elizabeth, we find—"Item, that when a Christian bodie is *in passing*, that the bell be tolled, and that the curate be speciallie called for to comforte the sicke person; and after the time of his passinge, to ring no more but one shorte peale; and one before the buriall, and another shorte peale after the buriall." Shakspeare alludes to this custom:—

And his tongue  
Sounds ever as a sullen bell  
Remember'd knolling a departed friend.

*Henry IV. Part 2.*

Mr. Douce thinks the Passing-Bell was originally intended to drive away any demon that might seek to take possession of the *soul* of the deceased, on which account it was sometimes called the *Soul-Bell*. We need scarcely add, this must have been one of the utmost extravagances of Popery; but old engravings of devils waiting in the chamber of the dying man to whom the priest is administering extreme unction—warrant the above inference. Mr. Ellis, in his notes

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\* In South America, bells are not unfrequently made of silver.



to Brand, quotes Wheatley's apology for our retaining this ceremony: "Our Church," says he, "in imitation of the saints in former ages, calls on the minister, and others who are at hand, to assist their brother in his last extremity. In order to this, she directs, that when any one is passing out of this life, a bell should be tolled," &c. Hence the proverb mentioned by Bede:—

When the bell begins to toll,  
Lord have mercy on the soul:—

and the following couplet, to be found in Ray:—

When thou dost hear a toll or knell,  
Then think upon thy *passing bell*.

Dr. Zouch considers the passing-bell to have been the origin of praying for the dead.

Pennant enumerates the mode of ringing this bell: "The canon allows one short peal after death, one before the funeral, and one other after the funeral. The second is still in use, and is a single bell solemnly tolled. The third is a merry peal, rung at the request of the relations; as if, Scythian-like they rejoiced at the escape of the departed out of this troublesome world."

*Why is St. Sepulchre's Bell tolled on the eve before and during the execution of criminals at Newgate?*

Because a legacy was bequeathed to that parish, on condition, that "after the several Sessions of London, when the prisoners remain in the gaole as condemned men to death, expecting execution on the morning following; the clarke (that is, the parson) of the church should come in the night time, and likewise in the morning, to the window of the prison where they lye, and there ringing certain tolls with a hand-bell, he doth put them in mind of their present condition, &c." He was likewise to toll the same bell, and pray with the criminals in the cart in the morning. The person by whom this legacy (£50.) was left, was a merchant-tailor, and the beadle of his company was to see that the conditions of the bequest were complied with. The

duty has, however, been transferred from the clergyman to the bellman, it being a very ancient custom for the latter, on the night previous to an execution, to go under Newgate, and having rung his bell, repeat these verses, as a friendly admonition to the wretched prisoners:—

All you that in the condemned hold do lie,  
Prepare you, for tomorrow you shall die!  
Watch all, and pray, the hour is drawing near,  
That you before th' Almighty must appear.  
Examine well yourselves, in time repent,  
That you may not t' eternal flames be sent.  
And when St. Sepulchre's bell tomorrow tolls,  
The Lord above have mercy on your souls!

*Past Twelve o' Clock!*

We learn this from Stowe, and an old work, the *Annals of Newgate*. The whole ceremony is, however, now commuted to the evening and morning tolling of the bell.

*Why were bells formerly rung during thunder-storms?*

Because they were believed to make the storm cease, and "purifie the aire." Aubrey says, "when it thundered and lightened, they did ring St. Adelin's bell, at Malmesbury Abbey."\*

#### DEATHS.

*Why is watching with the dead called, in the north of England, the Lake Wake?*

Because it is plainly derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Lic* or *Lice*, a corpse, and *Wacce*, a wake, vigil, or watching. This consists of sitting by the corpse from the time of death till its exportation to the grave, either in the house, or in the church itself. In Scotland, they are called *Like Wakes*, which ancient custom, Dr.

\* Akin to the superstitious reverence once attached to bells in England, may be mentioned the *oracion* in Spain, which sounds at sunset, when every one, as if by magic, seems fixed in his place, uncovers the head, and repeats, or is supposed to repeat, a mental prayer for a few minutes. At theatres, &c. the sound of this bell suspends the entertainments till the prayer is said; and so great is its effect, that it is said that assassins, at the moment of executing their horrid design, have held their hand at the sound of the *oracion*, and after repeating the habitual prayer, have perpetrated their diabolical purpose.—*Jacob's Travels*.

Jamieson says, "most probably originated from a silly superstition with respect to the danger of a corpse being carried off by some of the agents of the invisible world, or exposed to the ominous liberties of brute animals. But, in itself, it is certainly a decent and proper one; because of the possibility of the person considered as dead being only in a swoon." In Wales a similar ceremony is performed, with an illumination by candles. An Irish wake has been best described by the graphic pen of Miss Edgworth: "At night the body is waked; that is to say, all the friends and neighbours of the deceased collect in a barn or stable, where the corpse is laid upon some boards, or an unhinged door, supported upon stools, the face exposed, the rest of the body covered with a white sheet. Round the body are stuck, in brass candlesticks, which have been borrowed perhaps at five miles distance, as many candles as the poor person can beg or borrow, observing always to have an odd number. Pipes and tobacco are first distributed, and then, according to the ability of the deceased, cakes and ale, and sometimes whisky, are *dealt* to the company. After a fit of universal sorrow, and the comfort of an universal dram," a very lively scene ensues. Indeed, Miss Edgworth tells us "it is said that more matches are made at wakes than at weddings," which reminds one of Swift's note of the merriest faces being often seen in mourning coaches. Wakes among the Irish poor are by no means uncommon in London, where they soon pass from grave to gay. The candles are of the finer description, called moulds, and they have similar enlightenments at Easter, Christmas, &c.

*Why were the cats of the house locked up, as soon as any person died therein?*

Because they might be kept from making any depredations upon the corpse, which it is known they would do, if not prevented.—*Ellis's Notes to Brand.*

All the looking-glasses were likewise locked up on this



occasion. This is also common in France, and is thus explained by a French antiquary: "The individual has disappeared; he is carried to the bosom of the great family; he will not appear again on earth. Thus, his portrait, the glasses which represent only his mortal remains, become useless, when the soul which animated them is no longer among us. For the same reason that the glasses are veiled, many persons, particularly the Jews, empty all the water from the vessels in the house; and the country people in France assign as a motive for doing so, that they are afraid the soul, in departing from the body, will be drowned while washing itself in the water! The pendulums of clocks are also taken off, or stopped, because the last hour has sounded, time no longer exists for him who has been struck by the hand of death; he enters into eternity, and for him the hours cease to be marked!"

*Why are "corpse candles" so called in Wales?*

Because they are lights superstitiously said to veer towards the church-yard, which they enter, hover round the spot where the person whose death they intimate will be buried, and disappear. They vary in brilliancy and size, according to the person whose doom it is to leave the world: thus, an infant's would not be larger than the flame of a common candle, whilst a man's is proportionally larger. The colour is said to be a sulphureous blue, or red, and when any one observes them approach, if he does not move aside, he will be struck down by their force. If they are seen to stop, the corpse will do the same at the funeral; if they move aside, it will occur so at the burial; and, should two candles meet, the two funerals will do the same: it is also said, that if a person looks back at one after it has passed him, he will perceive the corpse and its attendants. It may be requisite to add, that these superstitious notions are actually current to this day in Wales, as we learn from a collection of *Cambrian Superstitions* published

but a few months since. The author says these lights must not be confounded with the Will o' the Wisp, and attributes their appearance to "a bishop of St. David's, a martyr, who, in olden days, whilst burning, prayed that they might be seen in Wales (some say in his diocese only) before a person's death, that they might testify he had died a martyr; and in many parts of North Wales, the people are almost distracted when they see them, as it is not known whose death they predict."

*Why, on the decease of any wealthy person, were the friends and neighbours invited to dinner on the day of interment?*

Because, originally a solemn festival was made at the time of publicly exposing the corpse, to exculpate the heir, and those entitled to the possessions of the deceased, from fines and mulcts to the lord of the manor, and from all accusation of having used violence; so that the persons then convoked, might avouch that the person died fairly, and without suffering any personal injury. The dead were thus exhibited by ancient nations, and perhaps the custom was introduced here by the Romans.—*Hutchinson's History of Northumberland.*

Feasting seems to have been a general accompaniment or supplement to a funeral. In Strype's edition of Stowe's *London*, we read from a parish register, that one "Margaret Atkinson, widow, by her will, October 18, 1544, orders, that the next Sunday after her burial there be provided two dozen of bread, a kilderkin of ale, two gammons of bacon, three shoulders of mutton, and two couples of rabbits; desiring all the parish, as well rich as poor, to take part thereof; and a table to be set in the midst of the church, &c." And in the minute-book of the Antiquarian Society, 1725, we read, in an account of a Highland Lord's funeral, "after the body is interred, a hundred black cattle, and two or

three hundred sheep, are killed, for the entertainment of the company."

*Why did the heathens follow the corpse to the grave?*

Because it presented to them what would shortly follow, how they themselves should be so carried out, to be deposited in the ground. Christians observe the custom for the very same reason; and, as this form of procession is an emblem of our dying shortly after our friend, so the carrying of ivy in our hands, sprigs of laurel, rosemary, or other evergreens, is an emblem of the soul's immortality.

Of these plants, rosemary was most common; and the pastoral poets frequently refer to its use. Gay, in a dirge, says—

To shew their love, the neighbours, far and near,  
Followed, with wistful look, the damsel's bier:  
Sprigg'd rosemary the lads and lasses bore,  
While dismally the parson walk'd before.

An old dramatist, Cartwright says—

Pr'ythee see, they have  
A sprig of rosemary, dipp'd in common water,  
To smell at as they walk along the streets.

Misson, in his *Travels*, says, when the funeral procession is ready to set out, "a servant presents the company with sprigs of rosemary; every one takes a sprig, and carries it in his hand till the body is put into the grave, at which time they all throw in their sprigs after it." In Shirley's *Wedding*, yew, bays, and rosemary, are thus mentioned:—

*Beauford*.—Are these the herbs you strow at funerals?

*Servant*.—Yes, Sir.

*Beauford*.—Ha' ye not art enough

To make this yew-tree grow here, or this bayes,  
The emblems of our victory in death?

But they present that best when they are wither'd.

*Why are so many stone coffins found in this kingdom?*

Because it is supposed that formerly all persons of rank and fortune were buried in that manner.—*Gent. Mag.*

The Sarcophagus, which is a Greek word, but adopt-

ed by the Latins, and signifies a coffin or grave, has its name from a certain property which the stone is said to have had, of consuming the dead body in a few days.—*Pliny, Nat. Hist.*

*Why are spears, shields, &c. sometimes found in the burial-places of ancient heroes?*

Because it was customary to bury these martial instruments with the owners, if the hero was the last of the family; otherwise, their armour was bequeathed to their sons, to be kept in the hall from generation to generation.

Again, it was probably believed, that the dead delighted in those things which had pleased them when they were alive, and that the disembodied spirit retained the inclinations and affections of mortality.—*Palgrave.*

*Why was the practice of burning the dead, general in ancient Greece?*

Because Heraclitus taught that fire was the predominant principle in the human fabric; and that, therefore, by the reduction of the body to its first principles, their purity and incorruptibility were better preserved. Another opinion was, that by burning the body, all rage and malice, the general issues of hatred and enmity, which often surround their object, were checked and prevented.

Sir Thomas Brown concludes a very learned dissertation upon the funeral customs of the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, the Jews, the Danes, &c. in favour of *cremation*, or burning; "for," says he, "to be knaved out of our graves, to have our skulls made drinking bowls, and our bones turned into pipes, to delight and sport our enemies, are tragical abominations escaped in burning burials." This species of interment is called *Urn Burial*, from the ashes being collected, and placed in a votive urn. The hearts of royal and noble persons are, in these times, preserved



and buried in urns: that of Lord Byron was thus conveyed to England, and placed upon his coffin in the vault.

*Why has burying in churches become so general?*

Because persons of reputed sanctity were first placed there: founders and patrons, and other great names began to creep as near as they could to the fabric, and so were laid in the porch, or in the entry of the cloisters, or in the cloister itself, before the chapter-house door, or in the chapter-house, or in the sacristy. Sometimes the bodies were deposited in the wall, first on the outside, and then in the inside, of the wall. In process of time, they began to erect aisles, and to bury and establish chantries in them; after which, they made free with the body of the church; and lastly, but chiefly since the Reformation, except in the cases of sanctity above-mentioned, they had recourse to the chancel.—*Gent. Mag.*

*Why have hour-glasses been found in coffins with the dead?*

Because it was an ancient custom to put an hour-glass into the coffin, as an emblem of the sand of life being run out: others conjecture, that little hour-glasses were anciently given at funerals, like rosemary, and by the friends of the dead put into the coffin, or thrown into the grave.

*Why were some funeral garlands called "depository?"*

Because they were carried solemnly before the corpse by two maids, and afterwards hung up in the church, in memorial of the deceased.

*Why were garlands subsequently placed upon the coffin in the grave?*

Because they were considered unbecoming decorations for the church, and were not allowed to be hung up there. This change was introduced with the last century.

*Why is it customary in some places to sing psalms at funerals?*

Because such was the practice in the primitive church. Mr. Gough quotes Macrobius, who assigns as a reason, that it implied the soul's return to the origin of harmony, or heaven.

*Why is a burial also called a funeral?*

Because of its origin from *Funus*, (Lat.) from *funes accensi*, or *funalia*, *funales cerei*, *cereæ faces*, vel *candelæ*, torches, candles, or tapers, originally made of small ropes or cords, (*funes vel funiculi*) covered with wax or tallow. We quote these roots to show, that all funerals among the Latins or Romans used to be performed by torchlight.

*Why were persons formerly buried with the burning of torches?*

Because it was very honourable; and to have a great many was a special mark of esteem in the person who made the funeral to the deceased. Thus, by the will of William de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, executed April 29, 1398, twenty-four poor people, clothed in black gowns and red hoods, are ordered to attend the funeral, each carrying a lighted torch of eight pounds weight. After the service, it was customary for the relations to extinguish their flambeaux in the earth, with which the corpse was to be covered.

Dr. Pegge, commenting upon a record of this custom, date 1460, says: "Little was to be done in these ages of gross popery without light. These torches cost 1s. 8d. apiece; but we find them of various sizes and prices. The churchwardens appear to have provided them, and, consequently, they were an article of profit to the church. The torches, it is conceived, were made of wax; and, in ordinary cases, were let out by the church, and charged to the party, according to the consumption at the moment. This appears in the York churchwarden's accompts, where wax is charged."



*Why at funerals, are wine and cake given among the rich, and ale among the poor?*

Because an entertainment or supper made part of a funeral among the Greeks and Romans: Cicero calls it *Circumpotatio*, or drinking round.

Misson, in his *Travels in England*, under 'Funerals,' says: "Before they set out, and after they return, it is usual to present the guests either with red or white wine, boiled with sugar and cinnamon, or some such liquor. Every one drinks two or three cups. Butler, the keeper of a tavern, (the *Crown and Sceptre*, in St. Martin's-street) told me that there was a tun of red Port wine drunk at his wife's burial, besides mulled white wine. Note—no men ever go to women's burials, nor the women to men's, so that there were none but women at the drinking of Butler's wine." Burnt Claret and diet bread were also used on these occasions.

*Why are funeral entertainments considered of very old date?*

Because Cecrops is said to have instituted them for the purpose of renewing decayed friendship among old friends, &c.

*Why do the Irish howl at funerals?*

Because the Romans formerly did so at the decease of their friends, they hoping thus to awaken the soul, which they supposed might lie inactive.

*Why was it formerly customary to kill a cow at an Irish funeral?*

Because of a Canon taken from an Irish Synod:—"Every dead body has in its own right, a cow, and a horse, and a garment, and the furniture of his bed: nor shall any of them be paid in satisfaction of his debts, because they are, as it were, peculiar to his body.

*Why were yew-trees anciently planted in church-yards?*

Because in times when it was considered important that the churches should, at certain seasons, be adorned with evergreens; and when, to strew branches in the way, and to scatter herbs and flowers into the graves, were practised as religious rites, it was "behovable and convenient for the service of the church," that every churchyard should contain at least one yew-tree. Several reasons may be assigned for giving this tree a preference to every other evergreen. It is very hardy, long-lived, and produces branches in abundance, so low as to be always within reach of the hand; and at last it affords a beautiful wood for furniture. It appears, that not only were trees, but also flowers formerly common in churchyards for ceremonies. Thus, in the will of King Henry VI, there is the following item: "the space between the wall of the church and the wall of the cloyster, shall conteyne 38 feete, whis left for to sett in certaine trees and flowers, behovable and convenient for the custom of the same church."

Mr. Brand and Mr. Ellis note nearly a dozen pages upon the planting of yew trees in churchyards; but neither of the reasons there adduced, appears to us more powerful than the fact of the yew being a consecrated tree in the ancient laws of Wales; wherefore, and by its natural sombre fitness, it would readily be admitted into our cemeteries. In these records,

"A consecrated yew, its value is a pound.

"A mistletoe branch, threescore pence.

"An oak, sixscore pence.

"Principal branch of an oak, thirty pence.

"A yew-tree (*not consecrated*) fifteen pence."

Sir Thomas Brown conjectures, from its perpetual verdure, the yew was used as an emblem of the resurrection; and tells us, that "the ancient funeral pyre consisted of sweet fuell, cypresse, firre, larix, *yewe*, and trees perpetually verdant."

The uses and properties of the yew have been copiously illustrated by the poets. Virgil calls it the

*baneful yew*,—and Dryden, the *mourner yew*. Shakspeare has numerous allusions: “slips of yew,” and “churchyard yew,” occur in the mystical rites of *Macbeth*; and the custom of “sticking yew in the shroud,” is mentioned in a song in *Twelfth Night*, thus:

Come away, come away, Death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away, breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,  
O prepare it;  
My part of death, no one so true  
Did share it.  
Not a flower, not a flower sweet,  
On my black coffin let there be strown.

Here Mr. Ellis reminds the reader, that in whatever country Shakspeare lays the scene of his drama, he follows the costume of his own. A credible person, who was born and brought up in a village in Suffolk, informed Mr. Ellis, in 1812, that when he was a boy, it was customary there to cut sprigs and boughs of yew-trees to strew on graves, &c.

We conclude with an exquisite Love Lament, from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*.

Lay a garland on my hearse,  
Of the dismal yew;  
Maidens, willow branches bear:  
Say I died true:  
My love was false, but I was firm  
From my hour of birth:  
Upon my buried body lie  
Lightly, gentle Earth.

*Why has the yew been called “double fatal?”* (Shakspeare.)

Because the leaves of the yew are poison, and the wood was employed for making instruments of death, as bows. (See *Sports and Pastimes*, p. 31: Part VI.)

*Why was cypress used by the heathens?*

Because, being once cut, cypress will never flourish nor grow again; and is thus an emblem of dying for ever; but instead of that, the ancient Christians used

other plants and deposited them under the corpse in the grave, to signify that they who die in Christ, do not cease to live ; for, though as to the body, they die to the world, yet, as to their souls, they live and revive to God.—*Bourne.*

*Why were the bodies of the ancients preserved by embalming ?*

Because they were kept with an antiseptic powder, composed of two parts of camphor, one of resin, one of nitre, and a sprinkling of rose-water and lavender.

*Why is an embalmed body called a mummy ?*

Because of its origin from the Egyptian word *mum*, wax, which is used in embalming. The custom of embalming, originated in a vanity amongst the Egyptians of being considered immortal.

*Why is a pompous tomb called a mausoleum ?*

Because the name was first given to a stately monument erected by his queen, Artemisia, to her husband, Mausolus, King of Caria.

*Why in the primitive Christian Church were crowns of flowers placed at the head of deceased virgins ?*

Because virginity was honoured, out of deference, most likely to the Virgin-Mother, with almost divine adoration, and there is little doubt, but that the origin of Nunneries is closely connected with that of the Virgin garland.

These garlands or crowns, were most artificially wrought in fillagree work, with gold and silver wire, in resemblance of myrtle, with which plant the fune-brial garlands of the ancients were always composed, whose leaves were fastened to hoops of larger iron wire, and they were lined with cloth of silver.—*Antiq. Repertory.*

The elegant pen of Miss Anna Seward informs us, date 1792, that the ancient custom of hanging a garland of roses made of writing-paper, and a pair of white gloves, over the pew of the unmarried villagers



who died in the flower of their age, prevailed to that day in the village of Eyam, (in Derbyshire) and in most other villages and little towns of the Peak. Gay thus alludes to these garlands:—

To her sweet mem'ry flow'ry garlands strung,  
On her now empty seat aloft were hung.

*Why was the selection of flowers, and the manner of arranging them into garlands a peculiar art among the ancients?*

Because the females communicated their sentiments to their lovers by a garland, as the oriental nations of the present day communicate a love letter, in a bouquet. It was not only the colours, but also the colour of each flower, that governed this symbolical language.

*Why were churchyards first used for interment?*

Because of the superstitious dread of the living. Mr. Strutt tells us that before the time of Christianity, it was unlawful to bury the dead within the cities, but they used to carry them out into the fields, and there deposit them. Towards the end of the sixth century, Augustine obtained of King Ethelbert, a temple of idols, (where the king used to worship before his conversion) and made a burying-place of it; but St. Cuthbert afterwards obtained leave to have yards annexed to the churches, proper for the reception of the dead.\*

*Why was there formerly a superstitious objection to burial in the churchyard north of the church?*

Because that quarter was believed to be appropriated for the interment of unbaptized infants, of

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\* A plan is now in progress for a public cemetery, in the neighbourhood of London, or "out in the fields," so that we are about to revert to a custom upwards of 1200 years old; though it should be added for very different reasons: our forefathers buried thus through fear, but the proposed change is on account of the crowded state of our churchyards, and a very proper consideration of the public health. We may add that public cemeteries have already been established at Liverpool and elsewhere.

persons excommunicated, and that have been executed, and of suicides. The Rev. Gilbert White, of Selborne, complains of the crowded state of the churchyard there: "at the east end are a few graves; yet none till very lately on the north side;" the south was generally preferred. In Ireland, the north was termed the wrong side of the church.

*Why are flat stones laid over the graves in churches and churchyards?*

Because that was the practice in very ancient times, as appears from the writings of Cicero and others. Mr. Gough tells us that "it is the custom at this day all over Wales to strew the graves, both within and without the church, with green herbs, branches of box, flowers, rushes, and flags, for one year; after which such as can afford it lay down a stone.

*Why were graves originally fenced with osiers, &c.*

Because they might be protected from beasts who were allowed to graze in the churchyard. Gay says:

With wicker rods we fence'd her tomb around,  
To ward from man and beast the hallow'd ground:  
Lest her new grave the parson's cattle raze,  
For both his horse and cow the churchyard graze.

#### FLOWERS—THE ROSE.

*Why were flowers formerly strewed at village funerals?*

Because such was a custom of the ancient church, and was observed among the heathens. Anchises grieving for Marcellus, makes him say:—

Full canisters of fragrant lilies bring,  
Mix'd with the purple roses of the spring,  
Let me with fun'ral flowers his body strew,  
This gift which parents to their children owe,  
This unavailing gift, at least I may bestow.—*Virgil.*

In Wales, this custom of strewing the graves, as well as filling the bed, the coffin, and the room, is observed to this day. We remember witnessing the latter rite, at Hemel Hempstead, in Hertfordshire, in 1809, where a young boy dying at school, the body and the open coffin, as well as the room in which it





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was placed, were decorated with flowers, and the school-fellows of the deceased, upwards of 100 in number, were admitted to view the mournful scene.

Of this custom there are many poetical notices.

Shakspeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*, makes Friar Laurence say:—

Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary  
On this fair corse.

Sir Thomas Overbury concludes his character of “the fair and the happy Milkmaid:” “Thus lived she, and all her care is that she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her windingsheet.” Again, Shakspeare’s Arviragus, in *Cymbeline*:—

With fairest flowers,  
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,  
I’ll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack  
The flower, that ’s like thy face, pale primrose; nor  
The azur’d hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom, not to slander,  
Outsweeten’d not thy breath.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Yea, and furr’d moss besides, when flowers are none,  
To winter-ground thy corse

And at Ophelia’s interment in *Hamlet*, (“that piece of Shakspeare’s which appears to have most affected English hearts,”\*)

Lay her i’ the earth;—  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring.

The appropriateness of spring-flowers for this rite is also touched upon by Herrick:—

Virgins promis’d when I died,  
That they would each primrose-tide,  
Duly morn and evening come,  
And with flowers dress my tomb:  
Having promis’d, pay your debts,  
Maids,—and here strew violets.

That excellent man, Jeremy Taylor, says, “Though I should like a dry death, yet I should not like a dry funeral. Some flowers strewed upon my grave would do well and comely; and a soft shower to turn these

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\* Shaftesbury.

flowers into a springing memory, or a fair rehearsal." The pious John Evelyn also says, "We adorn their graves with flowers and redolent plants, just emblems of the life of man, which has been compared in Holy Scriptures to those fading beauties, whose roots being buried in dishonour, rise again in glory."\*

*Why was the rose a favoured flower?*

Because it is distinctly specified in the ancient rite; indeed, the Greeks and Romans often, in their wills, directed roses to be strewed and planted on their graves, as specified by an old inscription at Ravenna, and another at Milan. It is also alluded to by Propertius and Anacreon.

Lord Byron, to a letter from Bologna, dated June 7, 1819, makes the following postscript:—"Here, as in Greece, they strew flowers on the tombs: I saw a quantity of rose-leaves and entire roses scattered over the graves at Ferrara. It has the most pleasing effect you can imagine."

Rose-trees on graves were not rare in England. Camden, in his *Britannia*, says, at Ockley, in Surrey, a few miles from Dorking, "is a certain custom, observed time out of mind, of planting rose-trees on the graves, especially by the young men and maidens who have lost their loves: so that the churchyard is now full of them." Aubrey observes of the same place:—"in the churchyard are many red rose-trees, planted among the graves, which have been there beyond man's memory. The sweetheart (male or female) plants roses at the head of the grave of the lover deceased:

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\* We could extend these notices of *Flowers on Graves* to many pages, were we to indulge our full feelings on the subject. *Père la Chaise*, at Paris, is too well known to require description here; indeed, the rite is too artificially observed there. Among our miscellaneous notices we find that the Hainanese have a custom of visiting the tombs of their parents once a year, in order to pluck away the weeds and grass from their graves; and freshen with paints of different colours the characters of their epitaphs: this they consider an imperious duty, and accordingly perform the ceremony with much solemnity.

a maid that lost her dear twenty years since, yearly hath the grave new turfed, and continues yet unmarried." Evelyn, whose authority for this custom we have just quoted, lived at Wotton-place, about four miles distant from Ockley, and thus testifies its observance there. Of the rose he says, "this sweet flower, borne on a branch set with thorns, and accompanied with the lily, are natural hieroglyphics of our fugitive, umbratile, anxious, and transitory life, which, making so fair a show for a time, is yet not without thorns and crosses." At Ockley, he adds, "the maidens yearly planted and decked the graves of their defunct sweet-hearts with rose-bushes."—*See his Sylva.*

Within a few miles of London, that emporium of art, at Barnes, on the banks of the Thames, is an interesting observance of this rite. On the south wall of the church is a tablet, enclosed by pales, with rose-trees planted on each side of it. This tablet is to the memory of Edward *Rose*, citizen of London, who died in 1653, and left £20 to the poor of Barnes, for the purchase of an acre of land, on condition that the pales should be kept up, and the rose-trees preserved. What amiable eccentricity!

In Wales, we read, the white rose is always planted on a virgin's tomb: the red rose is appropriated to the grave of any one distinguished for benevolence of character.

*Why are evergreens also planted on the graves?*

Because they may supply the place of flowers which have been merely stuck in the ground at the time of the funeral, and which soon drooped, and perished. The churchyard of Britton Ferry has been long noted for the luxuriance of the evergreens which overshadow the tombstones.

Flowers, however, appear to have been the favourite tributes of joy and grief.

With what touching truth has it been said there is  
Glory in the grass, and splendour in the flower,—



the emblematical employment of flowers in all ages of the world amply testify. Among the ancients, according to Pliny, flowers were used symbolical of spring; and upon many medals which represent this happy season of the year, by four children or genii, that of spring always carries a basket filled with flowers. Hope is also figured by the ancient artists and poets holding a flower in her hand. Venus is sometimes so represented, or crowned with a garland of flowers. Persons conveying good news crowned themselves also with flowers to indicate the happy tidings of which they were the bearers. They cast flowers in the paths of those whom they would honour, as we have shown to be still the custom on coronations, in marriages, and in lovers ornamenting with festoons and garlands the houses of their mistresses. They were also carried in the Floralia, as is our custom still on May Day. They crowned with flowers the victims which were led to sacrifice; and they decorated the tombs of their beloved and honoured kindred with flowers, which they renewed on the anniversary of their departure from this world, as is still the custom in Catholic countries. Flowers also among the ancients contributed to the joyousness of the banquet. The revellers wore chaplets or crowns of flowers upon their heads and round their necks; the perfumes of which were not only agreeable, but reckoned antidotes to infection.

Among the early christians, flowers were represented symbolically as representing gifts of the Holy Spirit. On this account it was, that at the feast of Pentecost or Whitsuntide, the priests cast flowers from the upper ambulatories of their churches, upon the congregation of the faithful assembled in the nave below; a custom which is still continued in Catholic countries, with the decoration of the churches, with flowers according to the season, which is observed also in many English Protestant churches. Flowers were also held by Ca-



tholics as symbolical of the delights of Paradise, and were accordingly figured upon the glasses of the early Christians; many representations of which are engraved in the works of Buonarotti.

*Why was the fourth Sunday in Lent called Rose Sunday?*

Because the Pope, on this day, carried a golden rose in his hand, which he exhibited on his way to and from mass.

*Why was it usual with lovers to place a rose in the ear?*

Because it implied, "Heare all and say nothing."—*Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*.—At Kirtling, in Cambridgeshire, is a juvenile portrait of Queen Elizabeth, with a red rose sticking in her ear.

The rose, as an emblem of love and friendship, has been the queen-flower of lyric poets. Who can forget the *Last Rose of Summer*, by Moore; but more especially the mournful minstrelsy of the last stanza:

So soon may I follow,  
When friendships decay,  
And from love's shining circle  
The gems drop away!  
When true hearts lie withered,  
And fond ones are flown,  
Oh! who would inhabit  
This bleak world alone?

*Why was it customary to gather a rose on Midsummer Eve?*

Because it was superstitiously associated with the choice of a husband or wife. This custom, a relic of Druidical times, is thus mentioned in the *Connoisseur*, No. 50:—"Our maid Betty tells me, that if I go backwards, without speaking a word, into the garden upon Midsummer Eve, and gather a rose, and keep it in a clean sheet of paper, without looking at it till Christmas Day, it will be as fresh as in June; and if I then stick it in my bosom, he that is to be my husband will

come and take it out." We heard the condition differently related in our "careless childhood:" the rose was to be gathered and sealed up, while the clock struck twelve at mid-day.

#### LEASING.

*Why is the custom of leasing or gleanings maintainable on the score of antiquity?*

Because we know it has existed from the earliest periods,—three thousand years and upwards, for certain, as testified by Ruth, who gathered three pecks and over in a day.

Mr. Knapp, in the *Journal of a Naturalist*, says "if it were not then first instituted, it was secured and regulated by an especial ordinance of the Almighty to the Israelites in the wilderness, as a privilege to be fully enjoyed by the poor of the land, whenever their triumphant armies should enter into possession of Canaan. By this law, the leasing of three products was granted to the destitute inhabitants of the soil, the olive, the grape-vine, and corn: the olive was to be beaten but once; the scattered grape in the vintage was not to be gathered; and in the field where the corn grew, 'clean riddance' was not to be made, the corners were to be left unreaped, and even the forgotten sheaf was not to be fetched away by the owner, but to be left for the 'poor and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow.' This was not simply declared once, as an act of mercy, but enjoined and confirmed by ordinances thrice repeated, and impressed with particular solemnity: 'I am the Lord thy God, I have given thee all, and I command unreserved obedience to this my appointment.'"

END OF PART XI.



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